

## Masters, Slaves, and Exchange

This book examines the political economy of the master-slave relation 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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*To my parents,  
Margaret and Anthony Hilliard*

# Masters, Slaves, and Exchange

## *Power's Purchase in the Old South*

KATHLEEN M. HILLIARD

*Iowa State University*



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## *Acknowledgments*

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Last Christmas, I unwrapped a package of bright pink pencils, my name and academic title embossed upon each. They're the key prop in a running joke within my family: Margaret and Anthony Hilliard have long threatened to show up to conferences and classrooms, passing these out to friends, colleagues, and students, a commodified sign of my labors, and of the close tie between us. Today, the splash of color in my desk drawer reminds me daily of the love, support, and good-humored perspective they have offered over the years, and all the writing I have yet to do. Let this book serve as poor payment for those pencils, and all the wonderful things they stand for. *Masters, Slaves, and Exchange* is dedicated to my parents, with love.

Pencils to sharpen, books to write, archives to plumb, the journey ahead is all the more exciting with Lawrence McDonnell at my side. Larry and I came together in work and love over an awful dinner at a hole-in-the-wall restaurant in Washington, DC's, Chinatown, fates sealed, so the fortune cookie said. Every day since has been a gift. My thanks to him, for everything, knows no bounds.

Archive Abbreviations

DUKE	David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina
GDAH	Georgia Department of Archives and History, Morrow, Georgia
GHS	Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia
LVA	Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia
NCOAH	North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina
SCDAH	South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina
SCHS	South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina
SCL	South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina
SHC	Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
VHS	Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia