

A Troublesome Commerce



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When Congress outlawed the international slave trade in 1807, the initially small and sporadic practice of selling slaves from one state to another quickly expanded. In this revealing study, Robert H. Gudmestad provides an in-depth examination of the growth and development of the interstate slave trade during the early nineteenth century, using the business as a means to explore economic change, the culture of honor, master-slave relationships, and the justification of slavery in the antebellum South. In tracing the transformation of this troublesome commerce into a southern scapegoat, Gudmestad also charts the changes that occurred concurrently in southern notions about slavery and southern identity. This provocative work proves the interstate slave trade to be vital to the making--and understanding--of the paradoxical antebellum South.

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目录:

[A Troublesome Commerce_下载链接1](#)

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