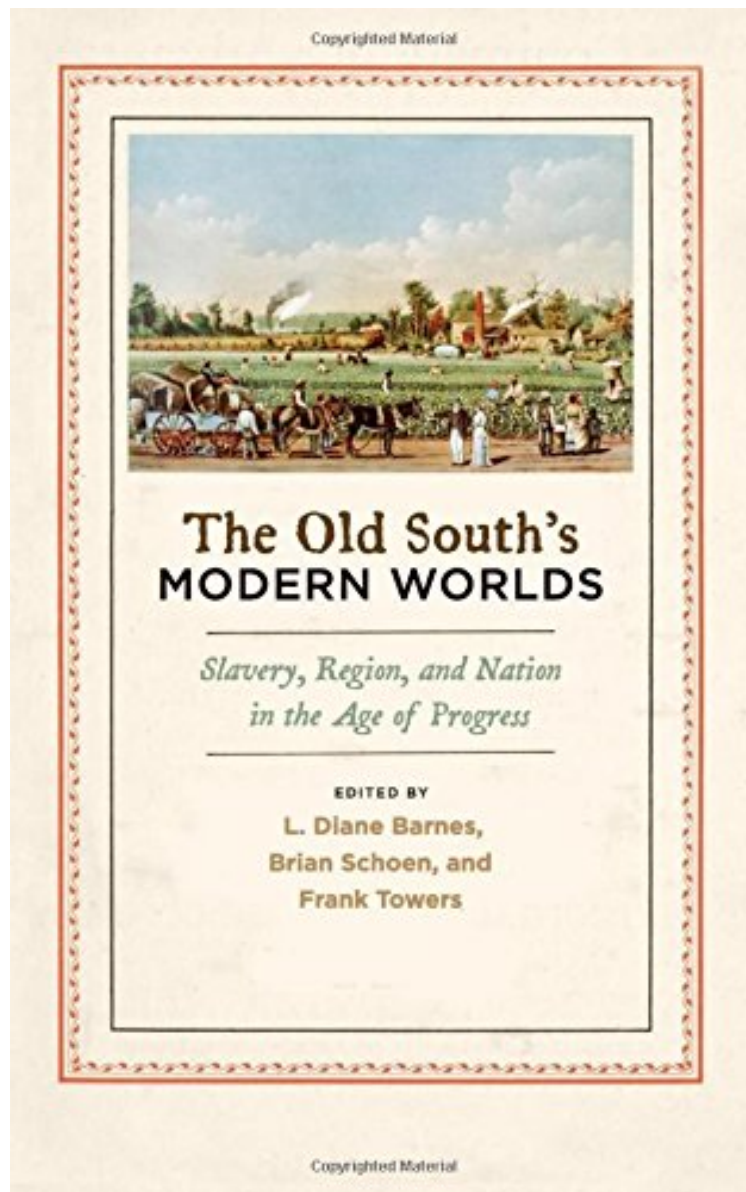


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## The Old South's Modern Worlds: Slavery, Region, and Nation in the Age of Progress

*From L Diane Barnes*

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By GunlordA thoughtful collection of essays concerning the American South's relationship to modernity. While not something I would assign to undergrads or a general audience, for academics it provides a very good overview of where Southern historiography currently stands. I'd recommend it.

The Old South has traditionally been portrayed as an insular and backward-looking society. *The Old South's Modern Worlds* looks beyond this myth to identify some of the many ways that antebellum southerners were enmeshed in the modernizing trends of their time. The essays gathered in this volume not only tell unexpected narratives of the Old South, they also explore the compatibility of slavery—the defining feature of antebellum southern life—with cultural and material markers of modernity such as moral reform, cities, and industry. Considered as proponents of American manifest destiny, for example, antebellum southern politicians look more like nationalists and less like separatists. Though situated within distinct communities, Southerners'—white, black, and red—participated in and responded to movements global in scope and transformative in effect. The turmoil that changes in Asian and European agriculture wrought among southern staple producers shows the interconnections between seemingly isolated southern farms and markets in distant lands. Deprovincializing the antebellum South, *The Old South's Modern Worlds* illuminates a diverse region both shaped by and contributing to the complex transformations of the nineteenth-century world.

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About the Author  
L. Diane Barnes is Associate Professor of History at Youngtown State University, associate editor of the Frederick Douglass Papers, and author of *Artisan Workers in the Upper South: Petersburg, Virginia, 1820-1865*. Brian Schoen is Associate Professor of History at Ohio University and author of *The Fragile Fabric of Union: Cotton, Federal Politics, and the Global Origins of the Civil War*. Frank Towers is Associate Professor of History at the University of Calgary and author of *The Urban South and the Coming of the Civil War*.