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The Lives in Objects: Native Americans, British Colonists, and Cultures of Labor and Exchange in the Southeast. By Jessica Yirush Stern (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017. xv +250pp., acknowledgements, appendix, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paper)

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The author of this concise and interesting book offers a new perspective on the topics of trade, labor, and exchange in the colonial Southeast. Rather than presenting the reader with an assorted catalogue of all the various types of exchanges, Jessica Yirush Stern wisely organizes her study around three central themes. First, she focuses on the cultures, ideologies, and mythologies that surrounded the production of goods in both English and Southeastern Indian societies. Second, she discusses the distribution of goods, exploring who stood to gain by enforcing market regulations. And finally, she examines the consumption of goods, carefully disentangling items that were gifts from those that were commodities; she shows how both Indians and Europeans imbued goods that served as gifts with different meanings and expectations than those purchased as commodities. Though the book stomps through some well-trodden ground, it offers a fresh take on trade by looking beyond the mere act of exchange and exploring the cultures that informed, framed, and complicated those commercial relations.

The book begins with a brief story of a Cherokee man trying to buy a gun in Charles Town in 1716. The storeowner, following a recent South Carolina law that prohibited the sale of guns to Indians, refuses to make the sale, but the unmannered Cherokee man eventually receives a gun as a gift from Governor Robert Daniel. Stern uses this seemingly simple set of events to ask some important questions: how did Southeastern Indians and Europeans understand and value traded objects as well as the people who created them? How were those beliefs put into practice and regulated? How did Indians and Europeans promote and control the colonial market? Through four chapters that explore the eighteenth-century colonial Southeast before the Seven Year's War the book seeks to answer these questions.

The first chapter examines production. Stern notes that while "historians have studied the mechanisms of Native American production techniques... none have compared the meaning of labor in Southeastern Indian and British colonial societies" (19). Examining Native creation myths as well as British pamphlets, the chapter argues that while Southeastern Indian communities tended to disassociate the value of a commodity from the labor performed by individuals to create it, the British colonists did just the opposite: connecting the value of labor to the value of the object. The second chapter examines commodity exchange. Stern argues that trade regulations were not only favored by South Carolina officials who had serious reservations about the value of free market exchange, but also that many Southeastern chiefs stood to gain from regulation.

Chapter three examines how and why British colonists and Native peoples gave gifts. Following the lead of scholars like Joseph Hall, Stern argues that gifts were not neutral commodities. She shows how South Carolina's gifting of guns, for

example, often came with the expectation that those guns would be used by Native men to fight alongside or for the British. Chapter four looks at commodities, which Stern defines as items that were purchased and had far less social-cultural baggage. In this final chapter Indians emerge not as victims of a complex Atlantic economy, but as active and thoughtful consumers. Stern shows how Native fashion wants and choices, for example, had a direct impact on trade.

The book stays squarely grounded in the British world. It thus glosses over the Spanish and French influence in the Southeast, missing the opportunity to connect its findings to larger stories and showing the limitations of examining a multi-lingual world through single-language sources. That critique aside, the book conclusively shows that Native Americans actively engaged in commerce, not merely in gift giving. Southeastern Indians were able to adapt, understand, and even manipulate European ideologies of commerce for their own benefits.