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Calvin Schermerhorn. *Money over Mastery, Family over Freedom: Slavery in the Antebellum Upper South.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011. 296 pp. $60.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-4214-0035-8; $30.00 (paper), ISBN 978-1-4214-0036-5.

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Networks of Protection and Endurance

From 1800 to1860, the African American slave trade of the Upper South became increasingly commercialized, fueling modernization across the United States. Coastal locations of the Chesapeake from Delaware Bay to the Cape Fear River operated diverse economies that included agriculture, commerce, industry, transportation, and domestic work. The high reproductive rate among Upper South slaves supplied a lucrative domestic slave trade network that extended into the Deep South. Internal improvements associated with the market revolution employed slave labor in the construction of canals, roads, railroads, and telegraph lines. At the same time, the interstate slave trade forced migrations that brutally separated African American families. In response, slaves developed strategic networks to preserve their families, and identified their increased agency as a source of strength and endurance.

Calvin Schermerhorn's *Money over Mastery, Family over Freedom* is part of the Studies in Early American Economy and Society from the Library Company of Philadelphia. An assistant professor of history at Arizona State University in the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies, Schermerhorn teaches courses on nineteenth-century American and Atlantic world topics. His book examines the economic culture of Chesapeake slave families who used opportunities provided by the market to forge relationships across class, gender, and race lines with masters, employers, clergy, and neighbors in attempts to forestall and prevent separation. Schermerhorn employs digital archive databases, business records, newspapers, correspondence, government documents, and a myriad of secondary sources in combination with the published slave narratives to reveal the struggles of Chesapeake slave families. His study focuses on the development of networks by slaves in rural and urban settings with an emphasis on the agency obtained through geographic mobility and flexible hiring arrangements. All the while, he presents the personal stories of slaves engaged in work on waterways, in factories, along railroads, and in domestic settings. The author declares, "In contests with slaveholders, and when and where they could, most enslaved people chose family over freedom. Slaveholders, in turn chose money over mastery" (p. 20).

Although slave sales boomed and busted due to the financial panics of 1819, 1837, and 1857 and the cotton production surges in 1810, 1830, and 1850, demand for slaves grew steadily. Schermerhorn demonstrates that slaves pursued strategic ties and exchanges within neighborhood, family, and church communities as they, "sought to order their world" (p. 24). In 1799, for example, a Delaware slave named Solomon Bayley attempted to gain freedom in the Sussex County Court by suing his Methodist owner, yet this act of disobedience resulted in his arrest and separation from his wife. He escaped his captors, found his wife, and traveled over 120 miles from Virginia to Camden, Delaware. In 1806, a local court manumitted his wife and daughter, and three Methodists assisted with the purchase of his son at auction. By 1813, the Bayley family had spent its savings and credit, but had obtained its freedom. Networks forged by slaves, however, were not always successful in preventing the physical violence and trauma of kidnapping and separation. Charles Ball's family was torn apart when his master died and the estate was distributed among his heirs. After four years of separation Ball traveled 450 miles from Columbia, South Carolina, to Calvert County, Maryland. He was caught by a slave patrol and shot in the leg before being jailed, but "like the legendary Odysseus," escaped to return to his family (p. 49). By 1820 Ball and his family lived on a small farm, but he was soon arrested and jailed as a runaway. Ball was

again separated from his family and sold into slavery in Georgia. After establishing another support network, he snuck onto a Philadelphia-bound vessel for a second odyssey. Ball returned to Maryland to discover that his wife and children were kidnapped away to the Deep South. Clearly, the threat of separation, violence, and forced migration remained a constant danger to Chesapeake slave families.

Commercialization in the coastal communities of the Chesapeake required slave labor on ships, barges, docks, canals, and waterways. Waterfront occupations offered slaves increased geographic mobility, overwork wages, and the opportunity to form ties with coworkers, customers, employers, and other market actors. A North Carolina slave named Moses Grandy lost four generations of family members to slave traders. In 1814 Grandy worked on Dismal Swamp canal boats as a pilot and ship manager, but his resources were not sufficient to thwart the sale of his pregnant wife and six children to Virginia. Six masters owned Grandy during his lifetime and he spent $1,850 to secure his freedom, but never saw his first wife or children ever again. Maritime slaves utilized resources occasionally to find displaced family members, but the intensity of commerce increased the scale of human misery. Schermerhorn emphasizes, "slavers erased their identities, effaced their history, and turned them into labor components of the commercial empire" (pp. 68-69). Frederick Douglass lost his entire family to slave traders, but gained a practical education in Baltimore while working in the violent shipyards. Schermerhorn notes, "The psychic and spiritual costs of separation from spouses and other family members are impossible to calculate" (p. 80). Peter Robinson worked as a steamboat captain, and established a network to protect his wife and twelve children. He traveled to California in 1850 to earn better wages, but was ultimately taken from his family in chains. Chesapeake slaves used their available tools, opportunities, and strategies to their advantage, but "each effort, however, must have felt like rowing against the tide" (p. 97).

Domestic slaves employed their wits, interpersonal skills, sentiment, and sexuality to recruit allies in kitchens, parlors, and neighborhoods. They exploited the market for resource accumulation and resorted to desperate strategies to hold families together. Domestic networks crossed class, gender, race, and generational lines to avoid separation at the auction house. Corina Hinton and Mary F. Lumpkin became domestic partners with slave traders out of self-preservation and bargained to protect other slaves. Harriet Jacobs escaped the sexual violence of her master in Edenton, but faced separation from her children as a result. Molly Horniblow, Jacobs's grandmother, used a vast network of love and loyalty to hide Jacobs in the attic of her bakery for seven years. Slave labor remained profitable in modernizing cities as masters hired out slaves to agricultural processing, industry, and canal construction. Seasonal work, hiring out, and the market allowed slaves to earn overtime wages, gain industrial skills, acquire property, and participate in the informal economy. As Schermerhorn points out, "Property ownership and commercial activity was integral to African Americans' family life" (p. 142). Even so, commercial success did not promise security and liberty. Henry Brown became a skilled tobacconist who gained quasi-freedom for his family through negotiating with his master, but saw a lifetime of progress extinguished when his owner's financial troubles resulted in the sale of his wife and children. Brown witnessed the coffle of nearly 350 slaves and recalled, "the adults, including his pregnant wife, were bound with shackles and tied together with rope while the small children rode on wagons" (p. 160). Despite his best efforts to establish a protective network, slave traders destroyed his family in one day.

The transportation revolution and internal improvements connected markets that expanded the slave trade. Schermerhorn explains, "Companies employed enslaved labor to construct new roads, maintain existing tracks, service trains in depots, and ride the rails as firemen, brakemen, porters, and stewards" (p. 165). The physical labor was repetitious, hazardous, and punishing work that separated men from their families, but supplied cash, skills, and education. The growth of railroads in the 1850s reoriented commercial geography and employed slave labor in mining and ironworks. Canals, roads, railroads, and telegraphs connected the South, allowing slave traders to arrange sales from across hundreds of miles. Rapid communication undermined the slaves' grapevine telegraph. Schermerhorn notes, "Slaves changed the nineteenth-century landscape in constructing railroads as they had transformed the eighteenth-century landscape through building plantations" (p. 182). Skilled gangs of enslaved railroad workers moved steadily across the South for years at a time, and their families suffered terrible dislocations as a result. Railroad shantytowns were crowded, uncomfortable, and disease-ridden, but created extended families of enslaved "sawyers, shovel men, axmen, cooks, boys, and men" (p. 185). Enslaved families struggled to maintain protective networks as markets expanded and slave trading centers shifted further south. Slaveholders commercialized the peculiar institution, and in the process, "fashioned an ideology of

emotion and sentiment that the enslaved used strategically" (p. 209). Market expansion increased the danger to enslaved families, but as some doors closed others opened, and family remained at the center of all calculations.

Schermerhorn demonstrates that Chesapeake slaveholders' methods of hiring out slaves fueled economic growth in the region. Geographic mobility and flexible hiring arrangements allowed slaves to earn overwork wages and establish protective networks in an effort to maintain family unity. Schermerhorn selects engaging accounts from the published slave narratives to support his argument that "within a hierarchy of values, the enslaved chose family over freedom" (p. 210). In his epilogue, the author cleverly connects personalities highlighted throughout the book within the lifetime of Virginia slaves John and Lilly Baptist. The Baptists witnessed expansion, internal improvements, market growth, technology, and freedom from their birth in 1777 to the legalization of their marriage in 1866 by Freedmen's Bureau agents. Schermerhorn proves that slaves fully engaged the market to increase agency and protect their families. He presents a balanced account of successful networks that held families together while pointing out that networks could be tenuous and quickly broken by external forces. *Money over Mastery, Family over Freedom* displays exhaustive research, a well-crafted argument, and is a valuable addition to antebellum slave historiography.

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