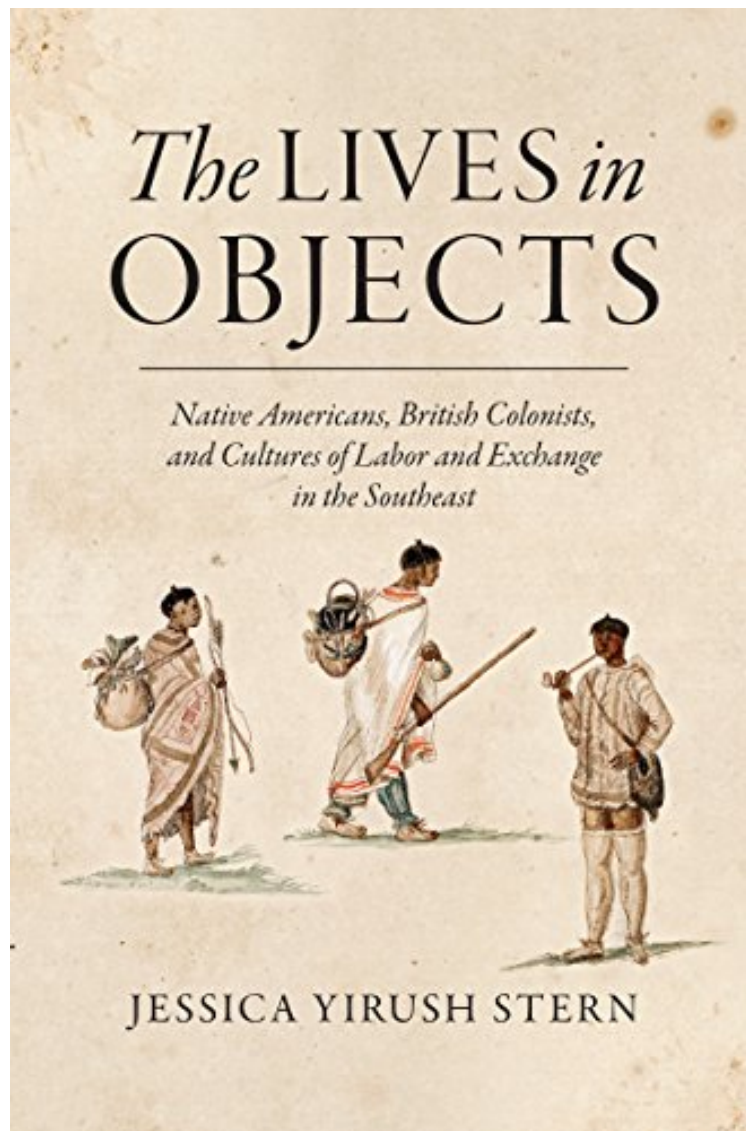


(Download pdf) The Lives in Objects: Native Americans, British Colonists, and Cultures of Labor and Exchange in the Southeast

## The Lives in Objects: Native Americans, British Colonists, and Cultures of Labor and Exchange in the Southeast

Jessica Yirush Stern

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**Jessica Yirush Stern : The Lives in Objects: Native Americans, British Colonists, and Cultures of Labor and Exchange in the Southeast** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lives in Objects: Native Americans, British Colonists, and Cultures of Labor and Exchange in the

Southeast:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Trade Rather Than One-Sided Gift-Giving in Native-British Relations  
By Anna Faktorovich  
Jessica Stern presents an alternative story of the trade relationship between Native Americans and the British, explaining that both sides mixed gift giving and commercial trade, rather than Native Americans being the unfairly treated party that gave gifts without gaining anything in return. The Introduction opens with an example of one exchange that began in 1716 when a Cherokee man was prevented from making a trade in Charles Town, South Carolina after an official oath taken after the Yamasee War, but the exchange still took place when the Governor Robert Daniel carried out a gift giving ceremony where the two parties exchanged ten beaver skins for a gun. This is an example of how gift giving could be a two-way stream with both parties giving gifts of equal value as they would in any trade of goods, only the exchange is marked as a way to honor and show mutual respect for the other party. This seems like a great argument: I could never imagine why Native Americans would keep offering gifts if white settlers simply kept taking them without engaging in the traditional return of a gift for a gift. The book is scholarly and detached: the best sort of book. It carefully examines archival evidence of various instances of trade and gift giving between these groups and draws logical conclusions. This is a great book for historians writing American history textbooks, as they should definitely incorporate these ideas and avoid suggestions that devalue and sideline Native Americans contributions to the early American marketplace. The current sad state of Native American reservations makes this type of positive thinking about Native Americans as business-minded people essential for the resurgence of these impoverished regions. --Pennsylvania Literary Journal, Volume IX, Issue 1

In *The Lives in Objects*, Jessica Yirush Stern presents a thoroughly researched and engaging study of the deerskin trade in the colonial Southeast, equally attentive to British American and Southeastern Indian cultures of production, distribution, and consumption. Stern upends the long-standing assertion that Native Americans were solely gift givers and the British were modern commercial capitalists. This traditional interpretation casts Native Americans as victims drawn into and made dependent on a transatlantic marketplace. Stern complicates that picture by showing how both the Southeastern Indian and British American actors mixed gift giving and commodity exchange in the deerskin trade, such that Southeastern Indians retained much greater agency as producers and consumers than the standard narrative allows. By tracking the debates about Indian trade regulation, Stern also reveals that the British were often not willing to embrace modern free market values. While she sheds new light on broader issues in native and colonial history, Stern also demonstrates that concepts of labor, commerce, and material culture were inextricably intertwined to present a fresh perspective on trade in the colonial Southeast.

An insightful analysis of some of the earliest discussions among British settlers and native people over the terms of commodity exchange in the American Southeast.--*William and Mary Quarterly*  
In this beautifully styled work, Jessica Yirush Stern opens the scholarly door to examine the meanings behind gift exchanges and trade for both colonists and Indians. *The Lives in Objects* is one of the best demonstrations of the argument that, although both the British and Indians were transformed through their trade relations, these transformations were shaped by long-term cultural continuities.--Robbie Ethridge, author of *From Chicaza to Chickasaw*  
Broad in its geographic and chronological scope, *The Lives in Objects* promises to change the way we think about European and Indian trade in the early Southeastern United States.--Timothy Shannon, Gettysburg College  
About the Author  
Jessica Stern is associate professor of history at California State University, Fullerton.