



Cultivating Success in the South: Farm Households in the Postbellum Era (Cambridge Studies on the American South)

Louis A. Ferleger, John D. Metz

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This book explores changes in rural households of the Georgia Piedmont through the material culture of farmers as they transitioned from self-sufficiency to market dependence. The period between 1880 and 1910 was a time of dynamic change when Southern farmers struggled to reinvent their lives and livelihoods. Relying on primary documents, including probate inventories, tax lists, state and federal census data, and estate sale results, this study seeks to understand the variables that prompted farm households to assume greater risk in hopes of success as well as those factors that stood in the way of progress. While there are few projects of this type for the late nineteenth century, and fewer still for the New South, the findings challenge the notion of farmers as overly conservative consumers and call into question traditional views of conspicuous consumption as a key indicator of wealth and status.

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