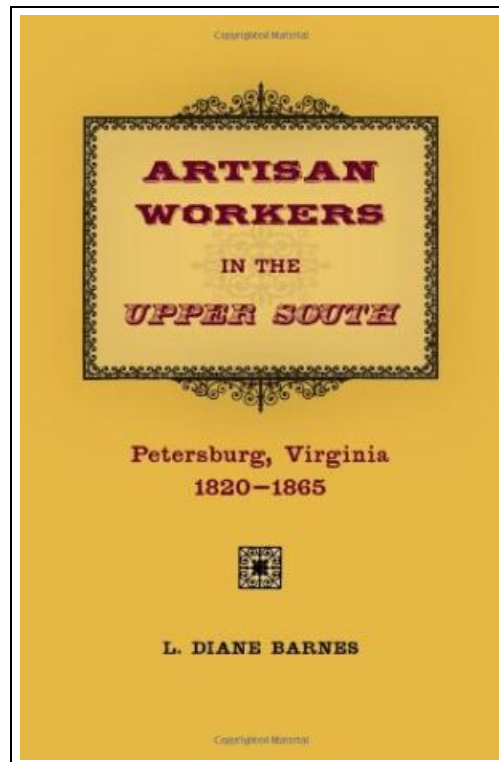


## Artisan Workers in the Upper South Petersburg, Virginia, 1820-1865



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## ARTISAN WORKERS IN THE UPPER SOUTH PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA, 1820-1865

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Louisiana State Univ Pr. Hardcover. Condition: New. 253 pages. Dimensions: 9.1in. x 6.0in. x 1.1in. Though deeply entrenched in antebellum life, the artisans who lived and worked in Petersburg, Virginia, in the 1800s—including carpenters, blacksmiths, coach makers, bakers, and other skilled craftsmen—helped transform their planter-centered agricultural community into one of the most industrialized cities in the Upper South. These mechanics, as the artisans called themselves, successfully lobbied for new railroad lines and other amenities they needed to open their factories and shops, and turned a town whose livelihood once depended almost entirely on tobacco exports into a bustling modern city. In *Artisan Workers in the Upper South*, Diane Barnes closely examines the relationships between Petersburgs skilled white, free black, and slave mechanics and the roles they played in southern Virginias emerging market economy. Barnes demonstrates that, despite studies that emphasize the backwardness of southern development, modern industry and the institution of slavery proved quite compatible in the Upper South. Petersburg joined the industrialized world in part because of the towns proximity to northern cities and resources, but it succeeded because its citizens capitalized on their uniquely southern resource: slaves. Petersburg artisans realized quickly that owning slaves could increase the profitability of their businesses, and these artisans—including some free African Americans—entered the master class when they could. Slave-owning mechanics, both white and black, gained wealth and status in society, and they soon joined an emerging middle class. Not all mechanics could afford slaves, however, and those who could not struggled to survive in the new economy. Forced to work as journeymen and face the unpleasant reality of permanent wage labor, the poorer mechanics often resented their inability to prosper like their fellow artisans. These differing levels of success, Barnes shows, created a sharp class divide that rivaled the racial divide in the...

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