



# Southern Scoundrels

Grifters and Graft in the Nineteenth Century

Edited by **JEFF FORRET** and **BRUCE E. BAKER**

The history of capitalist development in the United States is long, uneven, and overwhelmingly focused on the North. Macroeconomic studies of the South have primarily emphasized the role of the cotton economy in global trading networks. Until now, few in-depth scholarly works have attempted to explain how capitalism in the South took root and functioned in all of its diverse—and duplicitous—forms. *Southern Scoundrels* explores the lesser-known aspects of the emergence of capitalism in the region: the shady and unscrupulous peddlers, preachers, slave traders, war profiteers, thieves, and marginal men who seized available opportunities to get ahead and, in doing so, left their mark on the southern economy.

Eschewing conventional economic theory, this volume features narrative storytelling as engaging and seductive as the cast of shifty characters under examination. Contributors cover the chronological sweep of the nineteenth-century South, from the antebellum era through the tumultuous and chaotic Civil War years, and into Reconstruction and beyond. The geographic scope is equally broad, with essays encompassing the Chesapeake, South Carolina, the Lower Mississippi Valley, Texas, Missouri, and Appalachia. These essays offer a series of social histories on the nineteenth-century southern economy and the changes wrought by capitalist transformation. Tracing that story through the kinds of oily individuals who made it happen, *Southern Scoundrels* provides fascinating insights into the region's hucksters and its history.

**JEFF FORRET** is professor of history and Distinguished Faculty Research Fellow at Lamar University. His books include *Williams' Gang: A Notorious Slave Trader and His Cargo of Black Convicts* and *Slave against Slave: Plantation Violence in the Old South*, winner of the Frederick Douglass Book Prize.

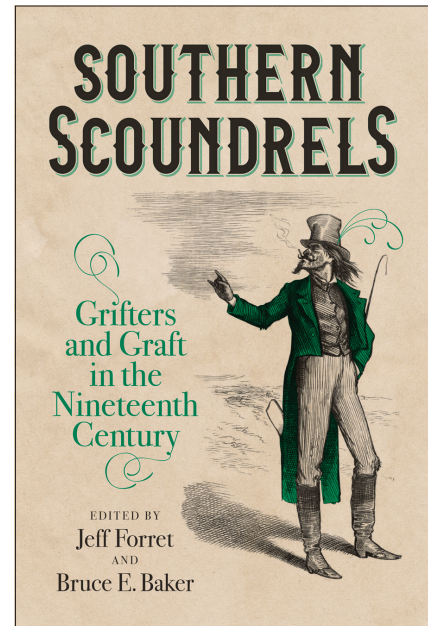
**BRUCE E. BAKER** is reader in American history at Newcastle University. He has published widely on topics related to southern history, including lynching, Reconstruction, historical memory, New Orleans, the cotton trade, and crime.

## PRAISE FOR *SOUTHERN SCOUNDRELS*:

"Come to these absorbing essays for their rip-roaring tales of fraud, but stay for the persuasive case they make: every market transaction in the nineteenth-century South involved people trying to buy cheap, sell dear, compete relentlessly, litigate successfully, and leave the other guy holding the bag."—Brian P. Luskey, author of *Men Is Cheap: Exposing the Frauds of Free Labor in Civil War America*

"This is a delightful set of essays sure to provoke and enlighten."—Kathleen M. Hilliard, author of *Masters, Slaves, and Exchange: Power's Purchase in the Old South*

"Here is the seamy underside of the nineteenth-century South told through its grifters, scappers, lockpickers, embezzlers, bought judges, wildcat bankers, slave traders, bounty hunters, and ladies prepared to lie under oath."—Scott Reynolds Nelson, author of *A Nation of Deadbeats: An Uncommon History of America's Financial Disaster*



**APRIL 2021**

272 pages, 6 x 9

978-0-8071-7219-3

Hardcover \$40.00s, ebook available

Southern History / U.S. History

Published with the assistance of the  
V. Ray Cardozier Fund

338 JOHNSTON HALL | BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70803

225-578-6294 | FAX 225-578-6461 | Orders/Customer Service 800-848-6224 | [www.lsupress.org](http://www.lsupress.org)