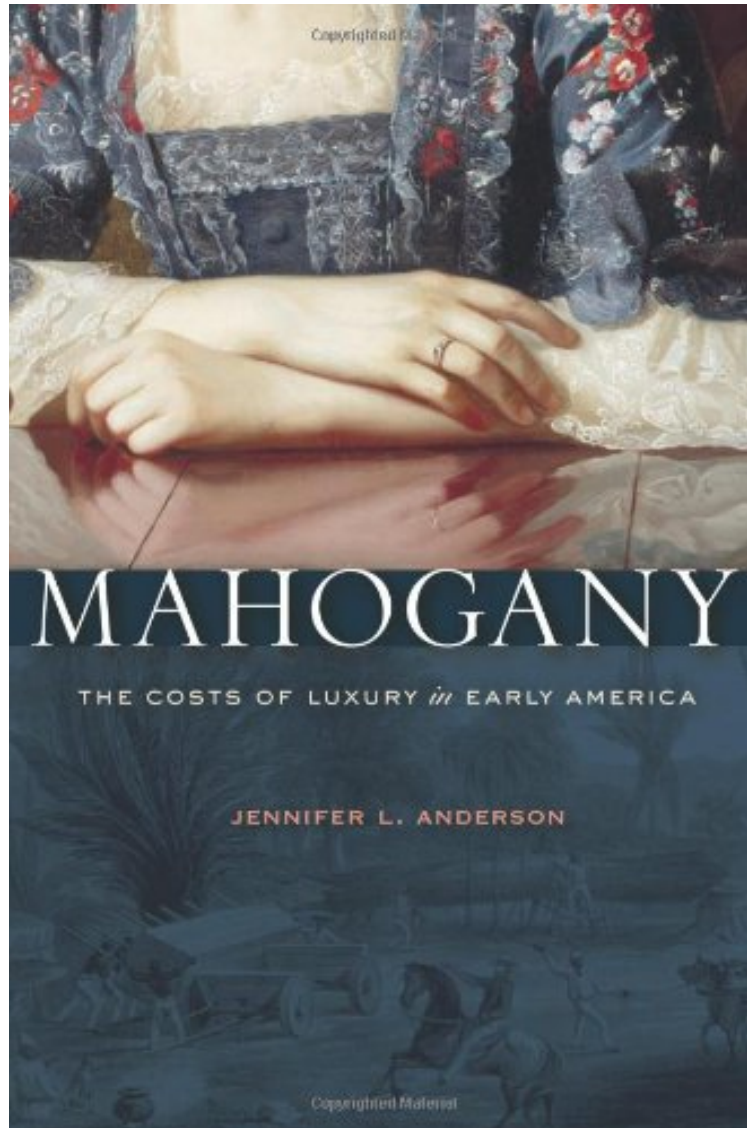


[Download free ebook] Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America

Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America

Jennifer L. Anderson

*audiobook / *ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#163440 in Books 2012-09-17 2012-09-17Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF #1 8.30 x 1.50 x 5.80l, 1.30 #File Name: 0674048717424 pages | File size: 24.Mb

Jennifer L. Anderson : Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. The Wood That Changed HistoryBy Elaine StattlerLooking at a piece of antique mahogany furniture, who could possibly conceive of the economic, social, and environmental story behind it? Yet, mahogany has a compelling history of international maritime trade, slavery, exploitation, and greed.Author Jennifer L. Anderson tells us, in her meticulously researched book, about the people, places, and events

that shaped the mahogany trade. Each facet of the trade is inexorably linked throughout history - and each facet comes with a cost. In early America, luxurious mahogany furniture was seen as a symbol of status and wealth. The wood was difficult to harvest, exquisitely crafted, and expensive to buy. Beyond the immediate gratification of owning such furniture, few recognized the real cost for this prized wood. The high demand for mahogany led to deforestation, the extinction of some types of mahogany trees, and the near extinction of others. Sadly, despite the devastating impact that mahogany logging had in early America, the logging of mahogany continues today. Here is a recent account by Greenpeace: "From the forest's edge, mahogany prospectors fly high above the rainforest canopy searching for single mahogany trees easily identified from the air by their distinctive canopy. Unlike most temperate and boreal tree species, tropical mahogany trees typically grow, not in clustered groves, but in relative isolation from one another. When a tree is spotted, its location is catalogued by handheld global positioning systems. When enough trees are mapped, illegal roads, sometimes stretching many miles, are punched from the forest's edge in a straight line, through national parks, through indigenous reserves, through private lands, straight to the tree in question. From this new illegal road, other roads are punched to other mahogany trees until the area is stripped of the species." As in earlier times, mahogany exploitation today has social and economic consequences (in addition to the environmental costs). Hopefully, by reading this book, we can learn from history, educate ourselves, and be more cognizant that we can probably best treasure mahogany by replenishing it or preserving it in its natural state. Recommendation to readers: The introduction to this book is integral to the remaining chapters, as it frames the story and puts all the information in a larger context so that the reader knows what to expect in the following chapters. Read it carefully for a better understanding of the material that follows. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Hum One of the most comprehensive accounts of the history of Mahogany I have read 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic book! By David Serxner Well written, well researched, amazing details. My only argument with Harvard titles is that they no longer put in a bibliography. The citations are in the end notes, which is a little annoying. Other than that, this book is fantastic.

In the mid-eighteenth century, colonial Americans became enamored with the rich colors and silky surface of mahogany. This exotic wood, imported from the West Indies and Central America, quickly displaced local furniture woods as the height of fashion. Over the next century, consumer demand for mahogany set in motion elaborate schemes to secure the trees and transform their rough-hewn logs into exquisite objects. But beneath the polished gleam of this furniture lies a darker, hidden story of human and environmental exploitation. Mahogany traces the path of this wood through many hands, from source to sale: from the enslaved African woodcutters, including skilled huntsmen who located the elusive trees amidst dense rainforest, to the ship captains, merchants, and timber dealers who scrambled after the best logs, to the skilled cabinetmakers who crafted the wood, and with it the tastes and aspirations of their diverse clientele. As the trees became scarce, however, the search for new sources led to expanded slave labor, vicious competition, and intense international conflicts over this diminishing natural resource. When nineteenth-century American furniture makers turned to other materials, surviving mahogany objects were revalued as antiques evocative of the nation's past. Jennifer Anderson offers a dynamic portrait of the many players, locales, and motivations that drove the voracious quest for mahogany to adorn American parlors and dining rooms. This complex story reveals the cultural, economic, and environmental costs of America's growing self-confidence and prosperity, and how desire shaped not just people's lives but the natural world.

Anderson's evocative and stunning Mahogany reminds us of both the deep ties between humans and trees and the sharp consequences of allowing our passion for beauty to trump nature's capacity to sustain a species. (Peter C. Mancall, author of *Fatal Journey: The Final Expedition of Henry Hudson*) 'When you drink the water, think of the well-digger,' is folk wisdom around the world. Anderson wisely adds, when you see elegant mahogany furniture, think of the hard-handed African slave hacking away, under deadly working conditions, at a tall hardwood tree in a hot, dense Caribbean rainforest. Like Sidney Mintz's classic study of sugar, *Sweetness and Power*, this book makes us see the familiar in new and disturbing ways. (Marcus Rediker, author of *The Slave Ship: A Human History*) Anderson has crafted a rich blend of the cultural history of mahogany, the social history of logging, the economic history of the mahogany timber trade, the environmental history of Caribbean forests, and the history of the natural history of mahogany. The result is an elegant essay in Atlantic history. (J.R. McNeill, author of *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914*) This superb study of a vital early American commodity focuses on its production, distribution, and consumption from the age of sail to the era of steam. Mahogany's sumptuousness came at a severe price, somewhat offset by enhanced knowledge of its properties and opportunities in its harvesting. With its highly nuanced and sophisticated argument, this book deserves a wide readership. (Philip Morgan, author of *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry*) From the 1720s to the mid-19th century, mahogany was the preeminent medium for conspicuous consumption on both sides of the Atlantic... However, as Anderson's superb [book] makes abundantly clear, the polished luster of these immaculate objects came from exploitative labor practices, ecological devastation, and phenomenal business failures, all of which attested to the

commodity's natural and human cost...Anderson's is a remarkable contribution to Atlantic history that...will be much enjoyed by anyone interested in the history of trade in colonial America and the Caribbean. (Brian Odom Library Journal 2012-09-15)[A] fascinating book about the most coveted wood in early America and, indeed, the 18th-century British Empire...This enlightening...study does for mahogany what others long ago did for sugar and tobacco, chocolate and coffee, rubber and bananas...From an impressive number of archival sources [Anderson] has assembled a vibrant collective portrait of colonial grandees--Benjamin and William Franklin, among them--declaring their social dominance through hard-won mahogany possessions. (Kirk Davis Swinehart Wall Street Journal 2012-10-19)Anderson details the history of the search for, trade in, and use of mahogany. Though the title directs readers to early America, for Anderson, America is in reality the Atlantic world. Most of the author's time is spent among the islands of the Caribbean or near the Bay of Honduras in Belize, where mahogany was harvested. Anderson paints a picture of the Atlantic world in which travel and trade were the norm and families lived and worked up and down the coasts of North and Central America as well as on numerous Caribbean islands. (S. A. Jacobs Choice 2013-03-01)About the AuthorJennifer L. Anderson is Associate Professor of History at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.