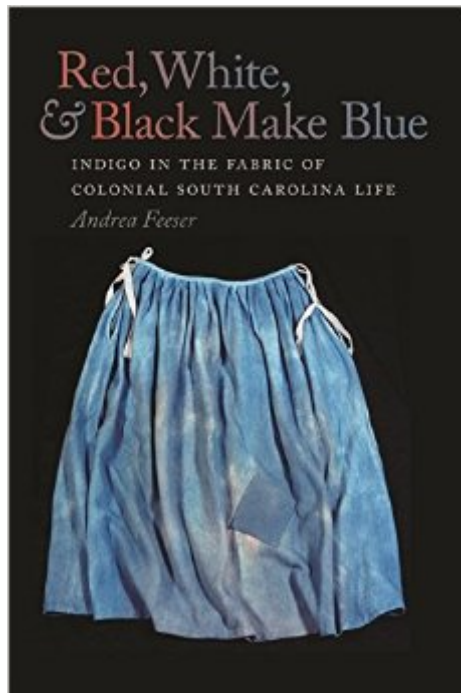


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# Red, White, And Black Make Blue: Indigo In The Fabric Of Colonial South Carolina Life



## Synopsis

Like cotton, indigo has defied its humble origins. Left alone it might have been a regional plant with minimal reach, a localized way of dyeing textiles, paper, and other goods with a bit of blue. But when blue became the most popular color for the textiles that Britain turned out in large quantities in the eighteenth century, the South Carolina indigo that colored most of this cloth became a major component in transatlantic commodity chains. In *Red, White, and Black Make Blue*, Andrea Feeser tells the stories of all the peoples who made indigo a key part of the colonial South Carolina experience as she explores indigo's relationships to land use, slave labor, textile production and use, sartorial expression, and fortune building. In the eighteenth century, indigo played a central role in the development of South Carolina. The popularity of the color blue among the upper and lower classes ensured a high demand for indigo, and the climate in the region proved sound for its cultivation. Cheap labor by slaves—both black and Native American—made commoditization of indigo possible. And due to land grabs by colonists from the enslaved or expelled indigenous peoples, the expansion into the backcountry made plenty of land available on which to cultivate the crop. Feeser recounts specific histories—uncovered for the first time during her research—of how the Native Americans and African slaves made the success of indigo in South Carolina possible. She also emphasizes the material culture around particular objects, including maps, prints, paintings, and clothing. *Red, White, and Black Make Blue* is a fraught and compelling history of both exploitation and empowerment, revealing the legacy of a modest plant with an outsized impact.

## Book Information

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: University of Georgia Press (November 15, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0820345539

ISBN-13: 978-0820345536

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (2 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

An in-depth study of the culture and material culture that surrounded 18th century South Carolina indigo production including slavery, trade, and many technical aspects. Sometimes I felt like it wandered a little aimlessly in its pursuit of Everything Indigo, but it was enjoyable nevertheless. I expected it to cover some more costume references, given that it is technically about a plant used in costume production

Better than expected.

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