AMBIGUOUS ANNIVERSARY
The Bicentennial of the International Slave Trade Bans
Edited by David T. Gleeson and Simon Lewis

In March 1807, within a few weeks of each other, both the United States and the United Kingdom passed laws banning the international slave trade, an economic activity from which both nations had garnered monumental profits for more than a century. Two hundred years later, Great Britain, an instigator of the slave trade and the chief source of slaves sold into continental North America, was awash nationwide in commemorations of the ban. By contrast the bicentennial of the ban received almost no attention in the United States. Ambiguous Anniversary aims to remedy that omission and to explain the discrepancy between the two commemorative responses. Edited by David T. Gleeson and Simon Lewis, this volume examines the impact that closing the international slave trade in 1808 had on southern American economics, politics, and society. Starting with accounts of the Constitutional Convention’s decision to defer banning the international slave trade until 1808 and moving through assessments of the ban’s effect on the enslaved and attempts in the 1850s to reopen the trade, these provocative essays establish the United States’ banning of the international slave trade as an important but partial step in the global history of abolition within the broader narrative of America’s expansion of liberty.

The 1808 ban was a collaborative international action that changed the economies and societies of Great Britain, the United States, Latin American, the Caribbean, and Africa, but the event had uncertain, perhaps unanticipated consequences in all those regions. The contributors capture some of these surprising consequences and differing responses to the ban, including the rise in internal slave trade and illegal smuggling of slaves as well as attempts to reopen the trade through the 1850s. Recasting the history of slavery in the early Republic and the memory of slavery and abolition in American culture, the foreword, introduction, and ten essays in this volume present a complex picture of an important but partial step in America’s long struggle toward the ambitious but ambiguous goal of liberty and justice for all.

September 2012, 248 pages, 2 illus.

Method of payment:
______ Check or money order (payable to USC Press in United States dollars)

Credit Card:   _____ American Express  ____ Discover  _____ Mastercard  _____ Visa
Account number:  _____________________________________  Exp. date: ________
Signature:  ____________________________________________________________

Name (please print):   ________________________________  Phone: ____________
Shipping address:   ______________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Send me ______ copy/copies
(hc, 978-1-61117-096-2, $49.95 each) ______
SC residents add 7% sales tax ______
Shipping and handling* ______
TOTAL ______

*add $7.50 for first book, $2.00 for each additional book

718 Devine Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29208
800-768-2500 • Fax 800-868-0740 • www.uscpress.com