



# The Conquest of Labor: Daniel Pratt and Southern Industrialization (Southern Biography)

*Curtis J. Evans, Curt J. Evans*

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In *THE CONQUEST OF LABOR*, Curtis J. Evans offers the first biography of Daniel Pratt (1799-1873), a New Hampshire native who became one of the South's most important industrialists. After moving to Alabama in 1833, Pratt started a cotton gin factory near Montgomery that by the eve of the Civil War had become the largest in the world. Pratt became a household name in cotton-growing states, and Prattville--the site of his operations--one of the antebellum South's most celebrated manufacturing towns.

As Evans shows in his painstakingly researched work, Pratt quickly adapted to his new region. He entered Alabama's political arena in the 1840s as a forceful advocate of southern industrialization and economic diversification, employed slaves as well as southern and northern whites in his factories, supported the Confederacy, served in the Alabama House of Representatives from 1861 to 1863, and played an important role in Alabama public life until his death.

Based on a rich cache of personal and business records, Evans's study of Daniel Pratt and his "Yankee" town in the heart of the Deep South challenges the conventional portrayal of the South as a pre-modern region hostile to industrialization and shows that, contrary to current popular thought, the South was not so markedly different from the North.

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