

# Free essay about the ruling race a history of american slaveholders

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



In the book, *A Ruling Race*, James Oakes outlines a view and perception of the slaveholding class entirely. Whilst prior history explains the class of the slaveholder's planters, James Oakes in his book does not agree that the planter gives an accurate representation of the entire slaveholding. In the book, slaveholding class included of diverse ethnic communities or groups that were shaped and controlled by differing economic, political, ideological, as well as demographic development. Slaveholding class could be divided into three phases, that of small, middle-class masters, and finally planters. The analysis is based on social, religious, as well as material justifications based on slavery that were used by the three groups indicated. Therefore, a look at the justifications that was used for slavery, Oakes shows the moral confusions that existent in the minds of a couple of slave owners.

First, focusing on white male planter-group and those who owned of diverse numbers of slaves, it clearly show how the previous historians failed to explain the majority of the slaveholding elite. Clearly more than half of those who owned slaves had five slaves or even fewer. The slave owner comprised of more than white males as the black were also involved. The groups that also owned the slaves were the free blacks, Native Americans, immigrants, mulattos, and women also owned slaves. Specifically, women, who were used in inheriting slaves from their spouses, consisted of 10% of the slaveholding Elites. This could be the reason why, Oakes stated that, the typical master never existed.

Although, Oakes explains the existence of ways in the average slave owners, the median slaveholder would be about forty-four years old. Thus, they used to recognize the age of the slaves. Most of them comprising of male white,

where by 1850 native-born occupied the South. Therefore, the past argument of the owning of the slaves could be said to be conflicting. The past or history explained the owing of the slave to be the white only by clear understanding and according to Oakes, free blacks also had their share in owing the slaves. There were also slaveholders irrespective of the sex as the women also would inherit the slaves from their husbands.

Again by the use of divisions of small slaveholder's, planters and middle-class masters, Oakes is seen as presenting complicating diversity as well as similarities liberating within the slaveholding class. In another perspective, the three groups, it could be said that there is a different relationship between slaves masters, the difference could be well noted when considering the small slave owners. To understand this, the small slaveholders comprised of those owners five slaves or less, and they would move and shift duties often. A look at the middle-class masters they comprised of well-educated professionals who could control and manage big firms where they would use the slaves.

The middle-class usually comprise of careers, so various fluctuations within the agriculture system never affected widely. The masters formed 25% consisting of slaveholders, as they held the lot of slaves in the South. The two groups would later move in and out of the slave owners class as it was relying on the season, , their personal wealth and market. On the other hand, the planter aristocracy consisted of those with well structured families who could inherit wealth. Therefore, lack of effort for those slaves or land differentiated the planters and the small slave masters or middle-class slave owners. Nevertheless, fewer than two and a half percent could own 50

slaves or more than 50. Critically, these divisions had a lot of role in the slave owners and thus they can be said to be the weaker point in the trade. Yet, the potential for social and demographic mobility led to similar ideological foundations amidst the three groups. Oakes describes the primary goals of both small slave owners and planters as purchasing land and slaves and moving west in pursuit of their objective (76). For all three groups, the acquisition of slaves signaled increased wealth, and the three groups felt the constant need to improve their status. Southern parents placed stress upon personal achievement and success, especially amongst the planter aristocracy. According to Oakes, because of the presence of the opportunity for social mobility, the slavery system did not conflict with the democratic ideals of freedom for whites.

Oakes points out the drawbacks of the slaveholding ownership to justify slave trade by use of the ideals of religion or church background. Although almost every slave owners belonged to Evangelical Christians, a lot of challenges emerged in justifying slavery where they would utilize Protestantism as well as revival Christianity. In the book, Oakes points at evangelical Protestantism as transformed the slaveholding culture more than anything afterwards. Those institutions that dealt with slavery had some conflicts with the religious sects of equality and anti-materialism, and the moral confusion provided a couple of slaveholders with a paradox in their running.

Oakes described that paradox for slaveholders through the statement that, in order to succeed one had to risk one's soul as failure was a disgrace.

However, often the slaveholders believed slaves would go to heaven,

automatically and slaveholders would later go to hell upon their death. Thus this can be said to be another area of argument as religion brought about conflicts in the owing and running of the trade. The paradox had a view of risking someone else for success, which in my view can be said to be unethical. The church never believed in such view. Slavery never was or will be accepted in the world. The sense of inferiority brought about by this differences people and classes. The religion also cannot encourage such thing as they all preach equality. However, the fact that world presents two classes, the poor and the rich, makes the two sides have superior and inferior. The poor have to work for the rich to earn living and in that sense; it could not be termed as slavery.

This book also brings about another area of conflict. Oakes argues that the same men who fought for democracy during the American Revolution later fought less for slavery a century later. Oakes portrayed the argument that the slaveholders' decision and idea to secede was never rejected as a major principle through which America later made and founded a reaffirmation. In response to this, Oakes explains that the slaveholder thought the freedom for personal property as well as fortune was at stake . . . Therefore, slaveholders later accepted the analogy that existed between secession as well as Revolution. The men in the America had fought for the revolution and this would be because revolution was for the entire America and it affected the whites. They were motivated since they were protecting their country from attack from the foreigners. On the other hand, Slavery mostly affected the blacks in the country as majority. The white were the ones taking advantage. The only blacks who were involved were the free blacks and had

no say since they were outnumbered. Oake's argument, was true to the standards of the American Revolution

Oakes suggested that historians closely looked the lives of slaves however they neglected lives of the slaveholders, a scrutiny intended to make things right with an accurate way that showed both the diversity as well as the commonalties of economic, political, ideological, and demographic advantages of the class. Therefore, he confronted issues typicality, thus the nature of power, and how slaveholders would maintain commitment to slavery when in the face of secession coming from a nation they had assisted to create. He specifically took issue from Genoese's monolithic image related to paternalistic planter class or large slaveholders, therefore finding it instead an repulsion of paternalism as well as toward liberal democracy of free-market commercialism in America.

Paternalism was diminished by the democratization within the immigration, through arrival of high numbers of artisan, Scotch-Irish, as well as Germans that started to accept slavery. The trend diverted the positions of slaveholders within the class, ethnic, race as well as religious points but the needed in disciplining and controlling slaves as well as devotion to those ideas of some properties which creates some commons bonds. This happens long before the 19th century the crucial aspects of the system of trade, that includes a rejection of paternalism,

Slavery can also create wealth, increasing the South's largest stratum thus making the nation's twelve wealthiest counties lying just below the Mason-Dixon or Adams and Mississippi that had the highest per capita richness. As the slaveholders could never be accounted for most of the Southern

population, a clear Southerners, the majority had a direct resource interest in slavery. At the same time, slaveholders became diverse or grew in numbers, they comprised of women, immigrants, Indians as well as free blacks although some patterns were evident, the average slaveholder could be 44 years old white male, native from the South, having eight to nine people who were slaves and land that was valued under \$3, 000, also involved in agricultural sector.

However, average slaveholder had disappeared within the history books, and at the same time they got replaced by a planter legend where Southern society would be analyzed from the perspective of a tiny class. Therefore the slave trade had a past minority which included people from the undeveloped countries who were bring brought to the south to work in their farms in agricultural areas and offering labor. The argument arises on the resources as te white would want to share them but not with the free blacks. The conflict had a past knowledge as the older people would control the others in carrying out their action of slave holding.

In conclusion, Oakes chronologically and in a rather well-laid work, portrays a lot of diversity present within the slave holding class. The book divides the slaveholding elite into three groups. Although the groups comprise of a varieties of ethnic groups, which are very similar in ideology and driving force for the slaveholders. This could be due to the opportunities for mobility socially as well as personal gains; the slaveholders never believe that slavery could conflict with democratic ideologies. On the eve of war, slaveholders argued that they were fighting for the same freedom and democracy they fought for during the American Revolution.

On account of continuous economic growth as well as sustained physical and demographic growth in the argument of democratization were the bases of domination of slave ideas. Many people believed that prosperity could be divinely supported, viewing slaves as well as western lands as majors in a physical as well as economically mobile culture. In the crucial ways the slave ownership experienced coincides with the bigger American experience. Apart from the defense of bondage the idea was familiar to the ideology on republicans of the 1850s. While the North looked at slavery as an antithetical to freedom, owners insisted that the freedom would not be possible without slavery.

Although putting slavery at the middle of the society Southerners got into conflict with northern tradition, leading to two incompatible ways of slavery that could lead to the War. By the year 1850s slaveholder's feared slavery would not survive as well as turned for secession. Some suggested some solutions to the crises internal, opening trade and increasing slaveholding and having all white men in owning slaves, further antagonizing the anti-slavery efforts, bringing to the clearly the phobia of an abolition that could impoverish the South part of the world. That phobia left no opportunity but secession, the objective of which was to protect slavery, not states' rights or Southern nationalism.

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