

## Chapter 91 - The Breadth Of Slave Ownership In The South

### Distribution Of Slaves

It's estimated that 30% of all white families across the early southern states own slaves – with the incidence ranging from a high of 70% in Georgia to a low of 18% in Maryland.

#### Percent Of Families Owning Slaves

	%
“Old South”	30%
Maryland/DC	18
Virginia	33
North Carolina	27
South Carolina	48
Georgia	70
Kentucky	29
Tennessee	26

From 1840 US Census

Starting with a white population of 4.8 million in 1840 and assuming an average of six people per household, there are just over 800,000 “families” in total across the South.

Thirty percent of that number yields some 240,000 families who are owners of the 2.5 million enslaved blacks. The distribution of these slaves is sharply skewed.

Thus about 70% of all slave-holders run small to mid-sized farms with under ten slaves, while only 12% have the twenty or more required to operate actual plantations.

But the real “tycoon elites” of the South comprise only about 8,000 families who own roughly 600,000 enslaved blacks.

#### Estimated Distribution Of Slaves In 1840

# Slaves Owned	Number Families	% of all Families	% of all Owners	Number Slaves	% of all Slaves	Likely “Use” Of Slaves Owned
<b>0</b>	560,000	70%	--	--	--	
<b>1</b>	40,000	5	17%	40,000	2%	Small farm
<b>2-4</b>	72,000	9	30	195,000	8	Small farm
<b>5-9</b>	56,000	7	24	332,000	15	Mid-sized farm
<b>10-19</b>	40,000	5	17	540,000	23	Larger farm
<b>20-49</b>	24,000	3	9	800,000	29	Small plantation

<b>50-99</b>	5,300	0.66	2	350,000	14	Large plantation
<b>100+</b>	2,700	0.33	1	243,000	9	Mega-plantation
<b>Total</b>	800,000	100%	100%	2,500,000	100%	

While slave owners are overwhelmingly white men and women, a small number are free blacks. In South Carolina, for example, data from 1840 show 402 free blacks owning 2,002 slaves, or an average of five per family. The highest ownership among free blacks traces to three sugar plantations in Louisiana, with 215 slaves belonging to Nicholas Metoyer and his family, 152 to a widow, Ciprien Richards and her son, and another 70 to Antoine Dubuclet and his wife, Claire.

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### The Southern Planter Tycoons



Planter James Marshman

### Twenty Largest Slave Owners Across The South

# Own	Name	Location	Mainly	Profile
2,340	Nathaniel Heyward (1766-1851)	Colleton, S.C.	Rice	“The Bluff.” A shrewd businessman who acquires 19 plantations over time. Dabbles in politics and signs “Nullification” doc. Nearly \$1 million estate at death in 1851.
1,130	Joshua J. Ward (1800-1853)	Georgetown, S.C.	Rice	“Brookgreen.” Known as “king of the rice planters.” Born on plantation, leads development of

				premium "Carolina gold long rice," SC Lt Gov 1850-52.
858	Dr. Stephen Duncan (1787-1867)	Issaquena, Miss.	Cotton	"Saragossa." Born in Pa, MD degree, to Natchez, efforts to re-colonize Africans, later anti-secession.
753	John Burnside (1810-1881)	Ascension, Louisiana	Sugar	"Houmas House." Belfast, Ireland native, buys from Wade Hampton for \$1million.
709	Meredith Calhoun (1805-1869)	Rapides, Louisiana	Sugar	"Calhoun's Landing." From Pa to Red River estate, editor of <i>National Democrat</i> .
700	William Aiken, Jr. (1806-1887)	Colleton, S.C.	Rice	"Jehossee Island." Other businesses are canals and railroads, SC Gov '44-46 then US House '51-57.
670	John Manning (1816-1889)	Ascension, Louisiana	Cotton	"Millford." SC Gov son, Princeton, marries Hampton daughter, politics, SC Gov '52-54, moderate secessionist, Beauregard staff in war, refuses oath to secure Senate seat.
659	Joseph Acklen (1816-1863)	W. Feliciana, Louisiana	Cotton	"Angola." Lawyer, marries plantation heiress and widow of mega-slave trader Isaac Franklin, lawyer, link to Texas Republic, and triples value of estate.
631	R.F.W. Allston (1801-1864)	Georgetown , S.C.	Rice	"Chicora Wood." West point grad, marries into elite JL Petigru family, scientific work on rice, SC Gov '56-58, opposes secession.
575	Joseph Blake (???)	Beaufort, S.C.	Rice	"Bonnie Hall." One of three Blakes, all heirs of colonial era Gov of Carolina, own slaves in England also. Little known.
550	John Robinson (1811-1870's)	Madison, Miss.	Cotton	"Annandale." Aristocratic life with little interest in farming operations.
540	Jeremiah Brown (1800-1863)	Sumter, Alabama	Cotton	"Lowden." Son of wealthy Baptist minister, SC College, law, large donations to Howard

				College (later Samford), equips CSA troops
538	Arthur Blake (???)	Charleston, S.C.	Rice	“Blake’s Plantation.” Related to Joseph and Daniel. Little known.
530	John I. Middleton (1800-1877)	Beaufort, S.C.	Rice	“Middleton Place.” Family from Barbados, father was SC Gov and Amb to Russia, he supports re-opening global slave trade and secession.
529	Elisha Worthington (1808-1873)	Chicot, Arkansas	Cotton	“Sunnyside.” Little know beyond reported romance with slave and children attending anti-slavery Oberlin College.
527	Daniel Blake (???)	Colleton, S.C.	Rice	“Board House.” Related to Joseph and Arthur Blake. Little known.
523	Dr. John C. Jenkins (1809-1855)	Wilkinson, Miss.	Cotton	“Elgin.” Father a wealthy Pa. iron mfr, MD from Dickinson, inherits from uncle, scientific experiments, dies along with wife and many slaves in yellow fever outbreak.
511	J. Harleston Read (1815-1866)	Georgetown , S.C.	Rice	“Rice Hope.” Born on plantation and inherits from his MD father. Little known.
505	John Mease Butler (1808-1863)	McIntosh, Georgia	Rice Cotton	“Butler Plantation.” Inherits via mother, Sarah Meese, daughter of Rev War and founder, Pierce Butler, changes name to Butler, deplorable conditions, his brother (Pierce) even a worse master.
491	Charles Heyward (1802-1866)	Colleton, S.C.	Rice	“Rose Hill.” Grandfather signs Dec. of Independence, attends Princeton, keeps extensive illustrated diary about property.

Partially from Tom Blake (2001)