



# **Black Slaveowners: Free Black Slave Masters in South Carolina, 1790-1860**

*Larry Koger*

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Were black masters different from white? An analysis of all aspects and particularly of the commercialism of black slaveowning debunks the myth that black slaveholding was a benevolent institution based on kinship, and explains the transition of black masters from slavery to paid labor.

### **Black Slaveowners: Free Black Slave Masters in South Carolina, 1790-1860 Details**

Date : Published December 1st 1985 by McFarland (first published November 30th 1985)

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Author : Larry Koger

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## **From Reader Review Black Slaveowners: Free Black Slave Masters in South Carolina, 1790-1860 for online ebook**

### **Jonathan says**

None

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### **Karen says**

\* Understanding Oppression: African American Rights (Then and Now)

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### **Lynne says**

Our history books were completely devoid of this accounting of the American slave trade, so many will find this book an eye-opener. It is well researched and thoroughly interesting to read.

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### **Regina Lindsey says**

It would not surprise me if this book/topic was considered controversial. Therefore, let me preface my review with a few comments.

I originally became interested in this topic during college, where as a history major one of my professors discussed the existence of free black slave owners in our area. Since I was pursuing a degree in history, I obviously had an interest in history and was really taken back because I had never heard of this topic and could not fathom how it could be true. I did some independent research and discovered that there was documentation of its existence in southeast Texas. I always intended to more reading on the subject but didn't. Then, I read The Known World by Edward P Jones and my interest was piqued again. By this time I was on Shelfari and this made it easier to search out some non-fiction work on the topic.

According to Koger's work there were more than 10,000 slaves owned by free blacks in Louisiana, Maryland, South Carolina, and Virginia. In this work Koger examines and documents the existence of free black (usually mulattos) who owned slaves in South Carolina during the 1800's and lays out the motivations for doing so. Often free blacks would purchase family members in order to grant manumission. However, when South Carolina passed a law that both houses had to approve an application for manumission (which was seldom done) family members would remain "slaves" but with a reunited family. However, this was not the only setting under which black slaveowners occurred. There were cases where the purchase of slaves was done for the same "economic" reason that whites purchased slaves. I stated earlier that I couldn't fathom how this could occur. My thinking was, "how could black knowing the cruelty that existed under this system participate in this sort of oppression." Koger argues that many of the free black slaveowner had never been a victim of the slave system as descendants of those who had gained their independence or they were slaves in

the urban areas where the majority of slaves were household slaves rather than field slaves who, according to Koger, received the most severe treatment.

I gave this a three because the book is well documented (probably too much for many) and addresses some of the questions I have. However, you REALLY have to be a history person to get through this book as it is very dry, awash with statistic and documentation, and Koger is QUITE redundant. Koger meticulously cross-references census data with the local tax roles in an attempt (probably) to fend off any criticism that the case is overstated. While there are personal stories included, even they read like what I envision a medical case history reading.

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### **MrsER says**

An absolutely fascinating book. I was shocked to learn that almost all Americans to whom I mentioned this book, had no idea of the fact that many Blacks owned slaves in the US! What are kids being taught in school?! This article will be an even bigger eye-opener to anyone interested in the truth:  
<http://americancivilwar.com/authors/b....>

An absolutely MUST read book to Americans!

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### **Rosa says**

I saw this book listed on a friend's page on Facebook and decided to read it. It really was a very good historically poignant book! It was very heart-wrenching to read how some people had to decide which family member to purchase to guarantee their freedom. It also opened my eyes to how many blacks, which I long suspected, did indeed partake in the for profit slave trade. This is the sort of history that is not taught but which indeed needs to be told. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the entire picture of slavery or to those who simply want to expand their knowledge of how slavery impacted blacks financially.

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