Black Slave Owners
Background
The first Europeans arrived in Jamestown Virginia in 1607, and the first large group of Africans arrived in 1619.
The census of 1624-25 showed that there were twenty-three Africans living in Jamestown, Virginia listed as servants and not slaves.
Africans coming to Jamestown between 1630 and 1640 could expect to be freed after serving their indented period of time about seven to ten years for Africans and Indians.
At this time there was no system of perpetual servitude or slave for life.
Slave Auction in Virginia
Africans who entered Jamestown between 1620 to 1650 could expect to be freed after serving their indentured time and given 50 to 250 acres of land, hogs, cows and seeds and the right to import both white and black indentured servants.
For a brief period in American history between 1630 to 1670, a number of Africans had become freedmen and owned indented white servants.
Stacking wheat in Culpepper, Virginia.
The act of 1670 forbid free Negroes to own Christian servants but conceded the right to own servants of their own race.
By 1670, it was becoming customary to hold African servants as “slaves for life,” and by 1681 what was customary became law.
AUCTION.

Will be sold on Thursday next, the 14th inst. at the COURT HOUSE, five likely negroes; Boys, Men and one Woman.

TERMS, CASH.

Jacksonville, Feb. 8th, 1856.
The 1800’s
There were black masters in every State where slavery existed including the North.
Slave Family
South Carolina
Free Black Slave owners and their slaves in Charleston.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Owners</th>
<th>Slaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>1,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>2,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>2,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>1,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1830, the state of South Carolina, lists 464 free blacks owning 2,715 slaves.
The census of 1830 also lists 965 free black slave owners in Louisiana, owning 4,206 slaves.
Free Woman of Color 1844
According to the 1830 U.S. Federal Census, eight African-Americans in New York City owned 17 slaves.
Female House Servant

New Orleans
1840
In 1860, of the $1.5 million in taxable property owned by free Negroes in Charleston, more than $300,000 represented slave holdings.
By 1860, so many Black women in Charleston had inherited or been given slaves and other property by white men, and used their property to start successful businesses, that they owned 70% of the Black owned slaves in the city.
Plantation Funeral 1860
Who were these black Slave Owners
Anthony Johnson
Anthony Johnson was a Negro from modern-day Angola. He was brought on a slave ship to Virginia in 1619.
When Anthony was released he was legally recognized as a “free Negro” and ran a successful farm.

In 1651 he held 250 acres and five black indentured servants.
In 1654, it was time for Anthony to release John Casor, a black indentured servant.

Instead Anthony told Casor he was extending his time.
Casor left and became employed by the free white man Robert Parker.
Anthony Johnson sued Robert Parker in the Northampton Court in 1654.
In 1655, the court ruled that Anthony Johnson could hold John Casor indefinitely.

The court gave judicial sanction for blacks to own slave of their own race.
Thus Casor became the first permanent slave and Johnson the first slave owner.
William Ellison Jr.
Born April Ellison sometime in April 1790 in South Carolina.
On June 8, 1816, at the age of 26, the artisan slave was freed by his master.
He appeared to have purchased his freedom by money saved from a portion of his earnings.
The following year in 1817, Ellison moved to Sumter County to establish himself as a cotton gin maker.
At first he paid for the labor of slave artisans who had been "hired out" by their masters.

Within two years he purchased two artisan slaves to work in his shop.
By 1830 he held four artisan slaves and by 1840 he held a total of 12 slaves who worked in his cotton gin business.
The Ellison family joined the Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross in Stateburg.

As a mark of their stature, on August 6, 1824, William was the first black to install a family bench on the first floor of the church.
This was usually reserved for wealthy white families who could afford to pay for a bench (and donate to the church).
In the 1850s, he opened and also operated a blacksmith shop with artisan slaves.
He advertised his business in the *Black River Watchman*, the *Sumter Southern Whig*, and the *Camden Gazzette*. 
By the 1850s, Ellison had also purchased 386 acres and his slave holdings were up to 37.
Ellison and his family established a family cemetery on their plantation.
According to transcriptions of the gravestones, it appeared his wife and three generations of descendants, including his sons and their wives, were buried on this property.
In 1852, Ellison bought Keith Hill and Hickory Hill rice plantations located in the coastal area of the Santee River.
This brought his land holdings to more than 1,000 acres.
In the entire state, only five percent owned as much real estate as Ellison.

Ellison owned more slaves than 99 percent of the South's slaveholders.
After the outbreak of the War for Southern Independence, in 1861 Ellison offered aid from his 63 slaves to the Confederate Army and converted his cotton plantation to mixed crops to supply food to the cause.
William died on December 5, 1861.

At his death he was one in the top 10% of the wealthiest people in all of South Carolina, was in the top 5% of land ownership, and he was the third largest slave owner in the entire state.
Antoine Dubuclet
Dubuclet was born in Iberville Parish, Louisiana the son of Antoine Dubuclet, Sr and Rosale (Belly), both were free blacks.
His father was part owner of Cedar Grove, a successful sugar plantation.
Upon his father's death Dubuclet took over his father's responsibilities and assisted in managing the plantation which held over 70 slaves.
In the mid-1830s he met and married Claire Pollard, a wealthy free woman of color.

Their marriage lasted till her death in 1852.
His successful management of both his and his wife's properties allowed him to acquire additional properties.
By 1860 he was considered the wealthiest free black slave owner in Louisiana.
In the early 1860s he met and married Mary Ann Walsh.
In 1860, Antoine’s estate was valued at $264,000.
From 1868 to 1878, Dubuclet was the Treasurer of the state of Louisiana.
Richard E. DeReef
Richard was born about 1798 in Charleston, S. C.
Richard was a wood factor and real estate investor.
In April, 1838 he purchased land in Charleston, on Calhoun St. and built a home.
At his death Richard owned 40 slaves.
Nicholas Augustin Metoyer
Nicholas was born on January 22, 1768 in Natchitoches, La.
In 1792, Nicolas married his first cousin Marie Agnes Poissot.
In 1795 he received a land grant of 395 acres.
In the years that followed, Augustin's brothers joined him.
In the mid-1800s, the combined holdings of Augustin and his brothers exceeded 18,000 acres and 500 slaves.
Augustin and his brother Louis were notable for founding and building the St. Augustine Parish Church in Natchez, Louisiana.
Upon the death of Agnes in 1839, the aging Augustin divided his remaining estate among all his children, and that "remainder" amounted to $140,425.35.
Augustin died December 19, 1856 in Natchitoches, La.
John Carruthers Stanly
Stanly, born a slave in 1774, was the son of an African Ibo woman and the white prominent merchant-shipper John Wright Stanly.
He was apprenticed to Alexander and Lydia Stewart, close friends and neighbors of his father.
They saw to it that John received an education and learned the trade of barbering.
Stanly developed a successful business and by the time he reached the age of twenty-one, he was able to provide for himself.
In 1798, through a special act, the state legislature confirmed the emancipation of John Carruthers Stanly.
Between 1800 and 1801, Stanly purchased his slave wife, Kitty, and two mulatto slave children.
By March 1805, they were emancipated by the Craven County Superior Court.
A few days later, Kitty and Stanly were legally married in New Bern and posted a legal marriage bond in Raleigh.
After securing his own and his family’s freedom, Stanly began to focus more on business matters.
He obtained other slaves to work for him and taught them the barbering trade.
John began to invest in additional town property, farmland, and more slaves.
One of John’s Homes in New Bern
Stanley eventually became a very wealthy plantation owner and the largest slaveholder in all of Craven County.
Stanly’s plantations and rental properties were operated by skilled slaves along with help from some hired free blacks.
During the depression of the early 1820s it was slave labor that kept Stanly economically stable.
The 1830 census reveals that Stanly owned, 163 slaves and has been described as a harsh, profit-minded task master.
John Stanley House
By the late 1820s, he had acquired three cotton and turpentine plantations and several rental houses.

His total assets exceeded $68,000.
Around 1824 Stanly began to face a series of financial difficulties.
His fortune began to plummet when the Bank of New Bern, due to the national bank tightening controls of some state and local banks, was forced to collect all outstanding debts.
He resorted to mortgaging his turpentine, cotton, and corn crops, as well as selling his barbershop.
In 1843, his last 160 acres of land were sold at public auction.
In 1846, at the age of 74, John Carruthers Stanly died.

At the time of his death he still owned seven slaves.
Closing Thoughts
In conclusion, there were many reasons why free blacks owned black slaves. There was a new class developing during the 1800’s made up of slave owning blacks and free light-skinned blacks.