



Plain Folk of the Old South (Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History)

By Frank Lawrence Owsley

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Plain Folk of the Old South (Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History) By Frank Lawrence Owsley

First published in 1949, Frank Lawrence Owsley's *Plain Folk of the Old South* refuted the popular myth that the antebellum South contained only three classes - planters, poor whites, and slaves. Owsley draws on a wide range of source materials -- firsthand accounts such as diaries and the published observations of travelers and journalists; church records; and county records, including wills, deeds, tax lists, and grand-jury reports -- to accurately reconstruct the prewar South's large and significant "yeoman farmer" middle class. He follows the history of this group, beginning with their migration from the Atlantic states into the frontier South, charts their property holdings and economic standing, and tells of the rich texture of their lives: the singing schools and corn shuckings, their courtship rituals and revival meetings, barn raisings and logrollings, and contests of marksmanship and horsemanship such as "snuffing the candle," "driving the nail," and the "gander pull." A new introduction by John B. Boles explains why this book remains the starting point today for the study of society in the Old South.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

This was the first book to systematically lay to rest the myth of the antebellum South's division into three classes- planters, poor whites, and slaves.

About the Author

Frank Lawrence Owsley (1890--1956) taught southern history for many years at Vanderbilt University, and later at the University of Alabama. He is the author of *State Rights in the Confederacy* and *King Cotton Diplomacy*, coauthor of *The United States: From Colony to World Power*, and one of the contributors to *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Traditions*.

John B. Boles is William P. Hobby Professor of History at Rice University and editor of the *Journal of Southern History*. He is the author of *University Builder: Edgar Odell Lovett and the Founding of the Rice Institute* and *The South through Time: A History of an American Region, Black Southerners, 1619--1869*, as well as numerous other books.

Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History

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