



# **Rich Man's War: Class, Caste, and Confederate Defeat in the Lower Chattahoochee Valley**

*David Williams*

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In *Rich Man's War* historian David Williams focuses on the Civil War experience of people in the Chattahoochee River Valley of Georgia and Alabama to illustrate how the exploitation of enslaved blacks and poor whites by a planter oligarchy generated overwhelming class conflict across the South, eventually leading to Confederate defeat.

This conflict was so clearly highlighted by the perception that the Civil War was "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight" that growing numbers of oppressed whites and blacks openly rebelled against Confederate authority, undermining the fight for independence. After the war, however, the upper classes encouraged enmity between freedpeople and poor whites to prevent a class revolution. Trapped by racism and poverty, the poor remained in virtual economic slavery, still dominated by an almost unchanged planter elite.

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