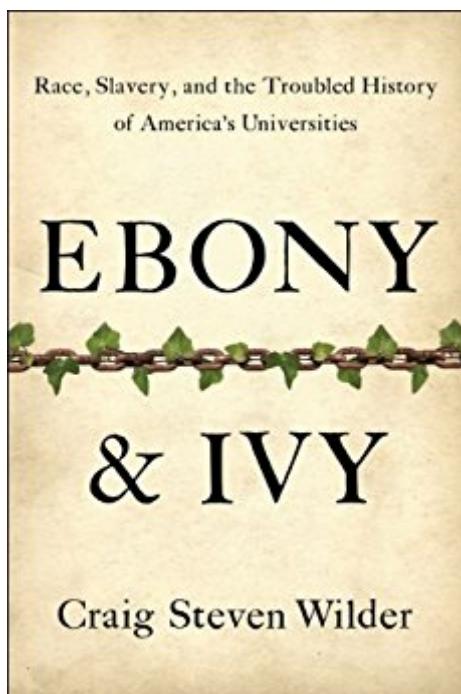


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# Ebony And Ivy: Race, Slavery, And The Troubled History Of America's Universities



## **Synopsis**

A 2006 report commissioned by Brown University revealed that institution's complex and contested involvement in slavery-setting off a controversy that leapt from the ivory tower to make headlines across the country. But Brown's troubling past was far from unique. In *Ebony and Ivy*, Craig Steven Wilder, a rising star in the profession of history, lays bare uncomfortable truths about race, slavery, and the American academy. Many of America's revered colleges and universities—from Harvard, Yale, and Princeton to Rutgers, Williams College, and UNC—were soaked in the sweat, the tears, and sometimes the blood of people of color. The earliest academies proclaimed their mission to Christianize the savages of North America, and played a key role in white conquest. Later, the slave economy and higher education grew up together, each nurturing the other. Slavery funded colleges, built campuses, and paid the wages of professors. Enslaved Americans waited on faculty and students; academic leaders aggressively courted the support of slave owners and slave traders. Significantly, as Wilder shows, our leading universities, dependent on human bondage, became breeding grounds for the racist ideas that sustained them. *Ebony and Ivy* is a powerful and propulsive study and the first of its kind, revealing a history of oppression behind the institutions usually considered the cradle of liberal politics.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

Focusing on the highest level educational institutions in early America, which were almost always closely connected to churches, Wilder provides a very strong demonstration of how deeply ingrained slavery was as not only a legal and normal institution, but an institution which was accepted by those considered to be society's highest intellectual and ethical leaders. This very readable book reflects the author's extensive research and balanced use of his findings. I would recommend it highly.

I have done a lot of Slave Trade work, but I was NOT expecting to learn so much about the Slave Trade and the merchants of that era building, funding, chairing, overseeing, guiding, etc., etc., etc., the major universities. Once the information got laid out, then I had a HUGE ah-ha moment!! So much made so much more sense. The universities, the reservoirs of all our knowledge, had to be tainted, complicit and benefactors of the slave trade because they educated all the teachers, the preachers, the children of the plantations owners. They managed the status quo, and that was around slavery. It was the economic driver of all things. Wilder does a great job of reminding us over and over again, the economic affiliations of all the cast of characters that founded, nurtured and justified slavery. Then when more was needed, they created the race science that would keep the Africans in his place -- the second class citizen. They taught and perpetuated the lie of skin color as a way to separate people. Humanity died a quiet death, and race has reigned supreme as the way to understand, define and separate humans going forward. Humankind has suffered because of those decisions from the most learned and the educational institutions they served. If you care about humanity, then read this book. Author of *Through the Lens of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*

Wilder's history of slave-holding by the early leaders and students at Ivy League colleges shatters any remaining illusions that slavery was a creature of the South. Imagine a Harvard man currying favor in a court of Europe by offering an American Indian slave. Wilder explores how the slave trade and the establishment of plantations in the South and West Indies that used slaves were driven by the interests of northern industrialists and merchants of the time. Beyond all of this, the book's

accounting of the subjugation and enslavement of the Pequots and other Indian tribes of New England in the name of converting them to Christianity should be enough to force a re-writing of the history of the area. All painstakingly documented. It's about time we had a history of the times that tells it like it was.

Ebony & Ivy demonstrates the beauty of truth-telling and scholarly research in a most dignified manner. It does not assign blame, it powerfully connects how things that happened in the past is embodied in the present, and continues to exist in the future. I believe that Dr. Craig Steven Wilder has gifted us, human kind, with a wealth of knowledge about the creation of educational institutions in America ... the soul of our American civilization. I am still amazed at how money is raised in the name of one group, but the money is mainly used to finance yet another group. I would highly recommend this book for all, especially professional educators ... the so called, "keepers-of-the-gate." At this time, I cannot imagine a masters or doctoral degree being conferred without a class using Ebony & Ivy as its core. Thank you, Dr. Wilder. Thanks to the many who helped to facilitate this scholarly work. In addition, Dr. Wilder, your interview with Amy Goodman on Democracy Now! is gracious, scholarly, magnificent ...!

This is a must-read for all people in American academia. It uses archival research to uncover the racist roots of our most prestigious private institutions of higher education. Students should be assigned this book and professors should discuss the vast implications of its revelations. Even IF we already knew that the economy of this country was based largely on slave labor, that our hallowed halls of academe also took advantage of our early forays into slavery and plantation products is eloquently demonstrated here. One of the most enlightening historical monographs I have read in years.

Excellent book!! Extremely intelligent read!! It sheds light on the demonstrative behavior of "white" people and why America will always be a blood stained country that (has and always will) strive and prosper from dehumanizing others. A country build on capitalism where Indians were bamboozled into thinking they could benefit from a partnership with whites and Africans were labeled an inferior species by all of the "top white" minds in that time period is a very disturbing beginning. Additionally, having the politicians, the churches, and the institutions of higher learning all in unison about how to manipulate and dehumanizing people for the profit of "their" ideals is sickening. Since the advent of this culture whites have been able to "pass down" all sorts of property: slaves, live stock, vessels,

acreage but then question why other races can not "do better" or wonder why people are upset that only whites are the predominant race in the "1%". When you can pass down free wealth while making sure no other race flourishes there will always be hatred. I am a mathematics educator and do not get to read leisurely often, but this book captivated me. I knew the history of the slave trade influenced churches, but I had no idea to what extent. All blacks are no where near how we are perceived, nor are whites; but when you have a book that is written so well and lays out historical facts as to how whites have and always will profit from the enslavement, dehumanizing, and killing of other races; it is very easy to not trust them.

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