

# The Long Death Of Slavery In The United States: 1777-1865 Race In The Atlantic

Slavery is a dark chapter in the history of the United States, a period marked by the inhumane and cruel treatment of African Americans. From the inception of the nation until its abolishment in 1865, slavery was deeply embedded in the fabric of American society. This article delves into the long and arduous journey toward the abolition of slavery in the United States, with a focus on the significant role race played in the Atlantic world during this turbulent period.

## Understanding the Atlantic Slave Trade

The transatlantic slave trade, which lasted from the 16th to the 19th century, played a central role in shaping the history of race in the United States. Enslaved Africans were forcibly taken from their homelands and shipped across the Atlantic to work on plantations in the Americas. This deplorable trade not only resulted in the forced labor of millions of individuals but also established a system of racial inequality that persisted for centuries.

The 18th century witnessed a rising tide of abolitionism as Enlightenment ideals and revolutionary fervor swept through Europe and the United States. Influential thinkers, such as Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine, began questioning the morality of slavery, paving the way for a series of events that would eventually lead to its demise.

### **Eighty-Eight Years: The Long Death of Slavery in the United States, 1777–1865 (Race in the Atlantic World, 1700–1900 Ser. Book 24)**

by Patrick Rael (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5



Language	: English
File size	: 4319 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 415 pages



## All Men Are Created Equal?

The notion of equality resonated strongly with the American Revolution, which sought to establish a new nation based on principles of liberty and justice for all. However, the contradiction between the ideals of the revolution and the reality of slavery created a tension that could not be ignored.

As the nation expanded westward, the issue of slavery became a major point of contention between the northern states, where slavery was gradually abolished, and the southern states, where it remained deeply entrenched. The battle over the expansion of slavery and the rights of the enslaved would ultimately lead to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861.

## The Fight for Freedom

The Civil War was a turning point in the struggle against slavery. As the conflict raged on, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862, declaring that all enslaved individuals in Confederate-held territory were to be set free. This pivotal moment marked the beginning of the end for slavery in the United States.

With the Union's victory in 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified, officially abolishing slavery throughout the entire nation. However, the fight for equality was far from over. Enslaved individuals faced numerous challenges in their quest for freedom, including discrimination, segregation, and violence. The legacy of slavery continues to shape the African American experience in the United States to this day.

## **Race in the Atlantic World**

The abolition of slavery in the United States was closely tied to the broader Atlantic world, which encompassed Europe, Africa, and the Americas. The transatlantic slave trade not only facilitated the migration of enslaved Africans but also led to the creation of a distinct racial hierarchy.

Race became a defining factor in the social, economic, and political systems of the Atlantic world. The concept of race was used to justify slavery, perpetuate inequality, and exclude certain groups from enjoying the full benefits of citizenship. The legacy of this racial hierarchy is still evident in modern society, as systemic racism continues to be a pervasive issue.

The long death of slavery in the United States provides a sobering reminder of the deep-rooted inequalities that permeated American society. From the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade to the ultimate abolition of slavery, the struggle for racial equality has been a central theme in American history.

The Atlantic world served as a catalyst for shaping the racial dynamics that persist to this day. By understanding the historical context of the long death of slavery and its impact on race in the Atlantic world, we can better navigate the complexities of race and work towards a more inclusive and just society.



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Why did it take so long to end slavery in the United States, and what did it mean that the nation existed eighty-eight years as a “house divided against itself,” as Abraham Lincoln put it? The decline of slavery throughout the Atlantic world was a protracted affair, says Patrick Rael, but no other nation endured anything like the United States. Here the process took from 1777, when Vermont wrote slavery out of its state constitution, to 1865, when the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery nationwide.

Rael immerses readers in the mix of social, geographic, economic, and political factors that shaped this unique American experience. He not only takes a far longer view of slavery’s demise than do those who date it to the rise of abolitionism in 1831, he also places it in a broader Atlantic context. We see how slavery ended variously by consent or force across time and place and how views on slavery evolved differently between the centers of European power and their colonial peripheries—some of which would become power centers themselves.

Rael shows how African Americans played the central role in ending slavery in the United States. Fueled by new Revolutionary ideals of self-rule and universal equality—and on their own or alongside abolitionists—both slaves and free blacks slowly turned American opinion against the slave interests in the South. Secession followed, and then began the national bloodbath that would demand slavery’s complete destruction.



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