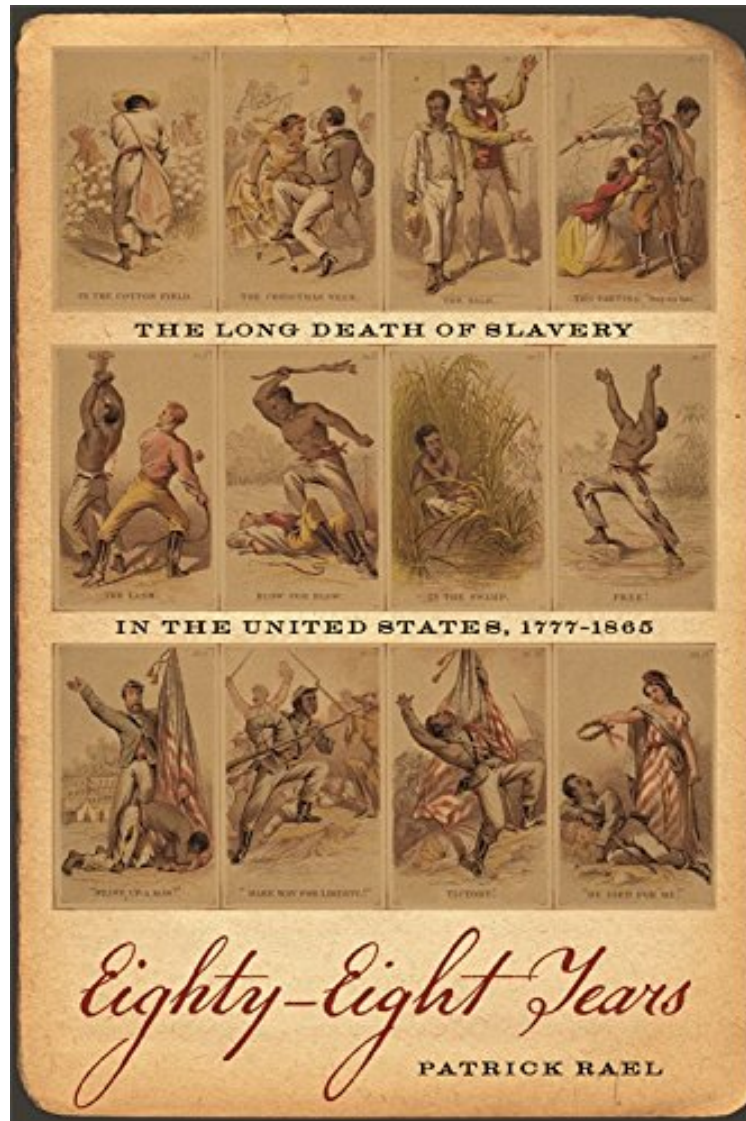


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(Race in the Atlantic World, 1700–1900 Ser.)

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

*Patrick Rael*

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**Patrick Rael : *Eighty-Eight Years: The Long Death of Slavery in the United States, 1777–1865* (Race in the Atlantic World, 1700–1900 Ser.)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Eighty-Eight Years: The Long Death of Slavery in the United States, 1777–1865* (Race in the Atlantic World, 1700–1900 Ser.):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A Major New Book By Kenneth W. Noe The last few years have seen the publication of several absolutely crucial and much-discussed books that together are forcing scholars to reassess the reality of slavery in the United States. In various ways those volumes put American slavery at the heart of international capitalism and the so-called "industrial revolution." This volume adds to that vital bookshelf. Although he is less interested in the "capitalism and slavery" argument than some scholars, Patrick Rael's sure-handed grasp of slavery and abolition throughout the Americas allows him to provide a similar, welcome international context for further understanding the experience of ending slavery in the United States. The latter chapters also contribute importantly to another overdue, recent development, the growing trend among American Civil War historians to resist parochial narrowness and understand the conflict as a world event. Written in elegant and powerful prose, this is a significant book that deserves a wide audience.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Quite Interesting and Informative By Theodore F. Schaaf Quite an interesting account of the abolition of slavery; in the entire western hemisphere, not only in the United States as the title states. There is considerable discussion of how slaves and free blacks contributed to abolition. Also a fair amount of discussion on the aftermath of slavery in the various polities. Found the history and timing of the abolition pretty informative. The first jurisdiction to abolish slavery was Vermont (1777) the last was Brazil (1880). The story is complex and informative.

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.

Patrick Rael's elegant prose wisely tells this narrative from a number of perspectives. Like all smart social historians, Rael understands that power cannot be ignored, and politicians on both sides of the Civil War are given voice in this important work. (Douglas R. Egerton author of *Year of Meteors: Stephen Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, and the Election that Brought on the Civil War*) Rael examines the long, slow death of slavery in the United States, masterfully showing how each event is connected and letting us in on secrets that textbooks never mentioned. . . . Rael enlightens us on the wide differences in slavery throughout the New World and its ending through the Caribbean and Latin America, and he effectively shows the difficulties of emancipation, reconstruction, and the pervading white supremacy of the North. There are not enough superlatives to describe the wealth of information in this book and the bright, clear way in which it is taught. Just buy it. (Kirkus's (starred review)) In this meticulously researched study . . . Rael adds detail and nuance to a story with which readers might have believed themselves already well acquainted. (Publishers Weekly) This important and vigorously argued study of the process of emancipation in the US, a process that began with Vermont's abolition of slavery in 1777 and culminated with the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865—eighty-eight years—examines American abolition and emancipation over time, broadening the perspective on a story that usually begins with the rise of radical abolitionists in the early 1830s. With its wider chronological lens and hemispheric context, Rael's book is a must-read study of slavery and its end in the US. (K.M. Gannon Choice) While many historians have built upon the work of Leonard Richards in describing the slave power's domination of US politics in the antebellum era, none have explained it as thoroughly as Patrick Rael! has in his synthetic, yet path-breaking, work on antislavery in the Atlantic. . . . His goal is to explain why it took eighty-eight years and a civil war to end slavery in the United States, and he achieves this through tight, yet thorough, analysis and the elegant, yet clear, prose his works are known for. (Beverly Tomek American Book) Other historians have increasingly made connections between slavery in the Atlantic and the United States, though Rael does much more than make connections—he succeeds at showing the strong similarities between Atlantic slaveholding societies, while at the same time explaining why this United States retained a strong interest in slavery longer than almost anywhere else. (James J. Gigantino II *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*) [A]n impressive achievement. . . . An ambitious synthetic work such as this is inevitably open to various qualms, protests, and quibbles. Among this work's multiple strengths is that it invites and rewards such critical engagement. (Matthew Mason *Journal of American History*) In terms of its chronological and geographic scope, *Eighty-Eight Years*' rivals are few and distinguished. . . . *Eighty-Eight Years* will prove of great value to scholars in the field of slavery and abolition, as well as those looking to catch up on trends in the field. (John Craig Hammond's in

History)About the AuthorPATRICK RAEL is a professor of history at Bowdoin College and one of the general editors of the *Race in the Atlantic World, 1700–1900* series. His books include *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North* and *African-American Activism before the Civil War: The Freedom Struggle in the Antebellum North*. Rael is an Organization of American Historians distinguished lecturer, 2010–2015.