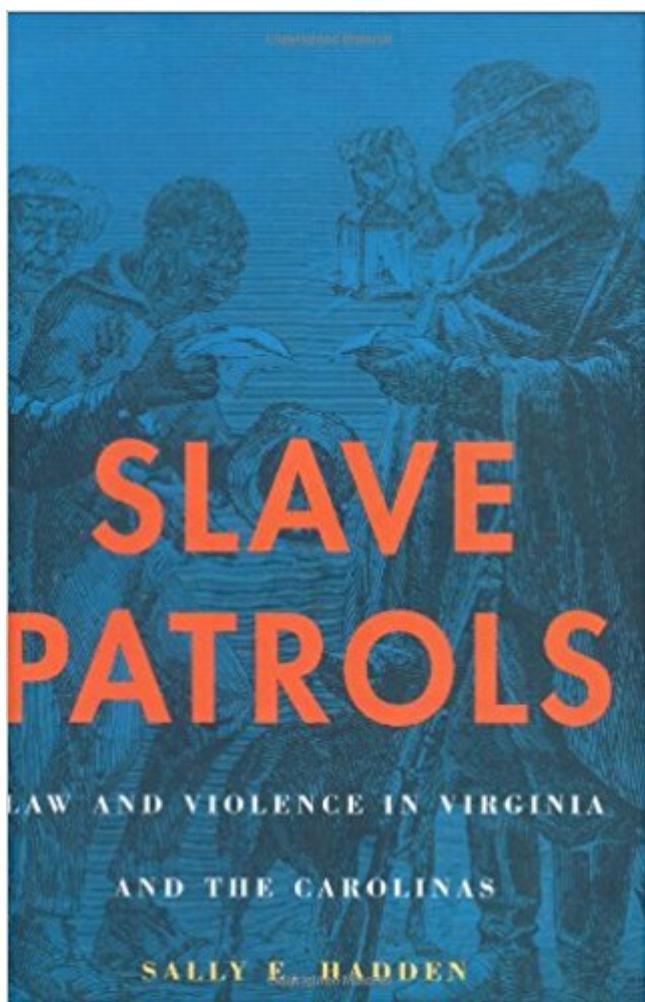


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Slave Patrols: Law And Violence In Virginia And The Carolinas (Harvard Historical Studies)



Synopsis

Obscured from our view of slaves and masters in America is a critical third party: the state, with its coercive power. This book completes the grim picture of slavery by showing us the origins, the nature, and the extent of slave patrols in Virginia and the Carolinas from the late seventeenth century through the end of the Civil War. Here we see how the patrols, formed by county courts and state militias, were the closest enforcers of codes governing slaves throughout the South. Mining a variety of sources, Sally Hadden presents the views of both patrollers and slaves as she depicts the patrols, composed of "respectable" members of society as well as poor whites, often mounted and armed with whips and guns, exerting a brutal and archaic brand of racial control inextricably linked to post-Civil War vigilantism and the Ku Klux Klan. City councils also used patrollers before the war, and police forces afterward, to impose their version of race relations across the South, making the entire region, not just plantations, an armed camp where slave workers were controlled through terror and brutality.

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Customer Reviews

Using a variety of sources, Hadden (history, Florida State Univ.) thoroughly analyzes the public regulation of slavery in Virginia and the Carolinas, focusing on slave patrols between 1700 and 1865. Adding new details, the author's in-depth analysis provides an understanding of the daily enforcement of slave laws and an awareness of how Southern police forces were influenced by

slavery and white dominance. The book is thematically organized, with chapters addressing topics that range from the formation of the original patrol groups, responses during crises like slave revolts, and the impact of the Civil War on patrols. She concludes that after the Civil War, the oppressive and brutal roles of the slave patrols were absorbed by other Southern institutions, such as police forces and the Ku Klux Klan. Hadden employs lots of primary sources and detailed notes on each chapter in this excellent, long-needed synthesis to supplement works like H.M. Henry's *The Police Control of the Slave in South Carolina* (1914. o.p.). This is essential reading, with much to offer all scholars interested in American history, slavery, and race relations. Edward G. McCormack, Univ. of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Lib. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

History professor Hadden offers insights into a part of U.S. history that has been little studied, despite the fact that it is an integral part of that history. Although slave patrols are most associated with the South, they were initiated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by Spanish and English colonists in the Caribbean. Once slavery took substantial root in the American South, local authorities began to adopt patrols as a means of policing slaves. The patrols were coordinated with other militia used to protect white colonists from Indians and other outside threats. With the rise of absentee plantation owners and the growth of towns, authorities used various carrots and sticks from fines to tax abatements. Patrols also changed from voluntary vigilante type groups, sometimes impromptu mobs, to paid civil servants. Whatever their structure, the patrols became part of the violent force used to react to slave revolts, the threat of such revolts, and runaways. Despite the bravado attached to their image, slave patrols were "an unequivocal manifestation of white fear."

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"Slave Patrols" is an outstandingly researched, and well written book, rarely dry. American soil was certainly neither a gift nor a land grant from the original inhabitants. America was seized by extreme violence. Slaves were not puppets. Their labor was extracted by ultra, up close and personal violence. Such violence has to be a 24 hour/day occupation. Therefore, night-patrols are not optional. Ms Hadden does every American a great service by documenting this propensity, this need for never-ending vigilance as a required adjunct to land theft, as well as theft of the fruits of slaves' labor. The latter theft being enabled by a willingness to employ both murder and torture, i.e.: whipping & rape. Unfortunately the line from colonial militias and antebellum slave patrols ends at today's police forces. And so it (violence) goes. 5 stars. Should be read by all.

Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas by Sally Hadden provided much needed context for the relationship between law enforcement and people of color. Hadden's book specifically provided historical background for the relationship between African Americans and law enforcement. Although the nature of slave patrols is quite grim, we learn that slave patrols were established by government institutions to enforce codes. These codes also known as slave and black codes, served to control behaviors of minorities. With Hadden's knowledge we are able to understand law enforcement's relationship with communities of color in a larger context. We can no longer take instances of racial bias as mutually exclusive. It's crucial to understand that instances of racial bias from law enforcement has historical significance.

The goal of this book is to highlight the importance of pervasive southern slave patrols, another example in history where Whites policed Black bodies. While most readers have heard of slave codes that emerged during slavery throughout the South, rarely is it mentioned that the state was a powerful force in ensuring the adherence to these racist laws and regulations. Hadden expertly details the origins, maintenance, and implications of these groups, suggesting that these patrols were the beginning of some of the worst crimes committed against Blacks, including those perpetrated by vigilantes and the KKK.

New. Received quickly. Enjoying it.

I grew up white in the Jim Crow South. I did not understand the violence against blacks and whites alike. My kin and their friends spent more energy and money trying to keep the blacks under, quite often depriving themselves and families of education, recreation, jobs, etc. I also did not appreciate the manner in which the law intimidated (although I saw it regularly) primarily blacks and sometimes whites. My education was the usual truncated, incomplete set of lies about how my world had come to pass (and the Civil War was still very relevant as was white power indoctrination). Race was a primary consideration in everything, always first having fear of blacks. Ms. Hadden has laid out how 250-300 years of fear of their own slaves conditioned many generations of whites of all classes to use violence routinely and casually, against blacks and then one another. The benevolent slave owner was a total lie. The story of arms in America and our high murder rates cannot be fully told without reference to the slave patrols and their successors, and into this century where we have a mindless lack of control over a population which has more than one gun for each person. The colossal, monumental political and social, not to mention moral, cowardice and religious

collaboration of the South, and the North with an evil system is largely beyond comprehension without works like this one. What do whites today owe blacks? A total respite from their now inbread fears stemming from 300 years of violent, socially approved and state-enforced discriminatory practices, some still blatantly even today. And what are we to make of rates of incarceration, particularly black, today, if not an extension of bias and violence from another age. Until America comes to terms with the lies called history which have concealed just how vicious their ancestors were and the horrors they perpetrated, we do not deserve racial peace. Again, I remember the stark, raging hatred of blacks on the part of people I was supposed to hold in high regard -- family and friends. And, always, the fear, always self-manufactured. And then, after centuries of these expectations, whites just cannot understand why some blacks would respond in self destructive manners, thereby fulfilling the false prophecies. And why blacks do not trust whites or police - 300 years of terror. Ms. Hadden, thank you for helping to drive back darkness and let the light into a festering and immoral situation.

Sally Hadden's book is one of the very few that deal with this under reported aspect of slavery. Her research makes heavy use of original sources, including local government and court records, the WPA slave narratives, and personal diaries from the antebellum period. This book is an important piece of scholarship, originally written as a doctoral dissertation at Harvard. It provides insight into one of the formative issues in American history, without romanticizing or sentimentality, but with a clear-headed look at her subject. Slavery had to be constantly enforced, and the slaves kept under control to prevent escape or revolt. This is an important book and deserves to be widely read.

Excellent review of the factors that impacted slavery through Reconstruction and today's gun rights issues.

Good work, well researched and well-written. Good references and overall useful.

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