
Enslaved Rebellion Article Set

The Stono Rebellion *Secondary Source from PBS.com*

South Carolina, September 9, 1739: A band of enslaved African Americans march down the road, carrying banners that proclaim "Liberty!". They shout out the same word. Led by an Angolan named Jemmy, the men and women continue to walk south, recruiting more slaves along the way. By the time they stop to rest for the night, their numbers will have approached one hundred.

What exactly triggered the Stono Rebellion is not clear. Many slaves knew that small groups of runaways had made their way from South Carolina to Florida, where they had been given freedom and land. Looking to cause unrest within the English colonies, the Spanish had issued a proclamation stating that any slave who deserted to [the Floridian fort of] St. Augustine would be given the same treatment. Certainly this influenced the potential rebels and made them willing to accept their situation. A fall epidemic had disrupted the colonial government in nearby [South Carolina capital] Charlestown (Charleston), and word had just arrived that England and Spain were at war, raising hopes that the Spanish in St. Augustine would give a positive reception to slaves escaping from Carolina plantations. But what may have actually triggered the rebellion on September 9th was the soon-to-be-enacted Security Act.

In mid-August, a Charlestown newspaper announced the Security Act. A response to the white's fears of insurrection, the act required that all white men carry firearms to church on Sundays, a time when whites usually didn't carry weapons and slaves were allowed to work for themselves. Anyone who didn't comply with the new law by September 29 would be subjected to a fine.

Whatever triggered the Rebellion, early on the morning of the 9th, a Sunday, about twenty slaves gathered near the Stono River in St. Paul's Parish, less than twenty miles from Charlestown. The slaves went to a shop that sold firearms and ammunition, armed themselves, then killed the two shopkeepers who were manning the shop. From there the band walked to the house of a Mr. Godfrey, where they burned the house and killed Godfrey and his son and daughter. They headed south. It was not yet dawn when they reached Wallace's Tavern. Because the innkeeper at the tavern was kind to his slaves, his life was spared. The white inhabitants of the next six or so houses they reached were not so lucky -- all were killed. The slaves belonging to Thomas Rose successfully hid their master, but they were forced to join the rebellion. Other slaves willingly joined the rebellion. By eleven in the morning, the group was about 50 strong. The few whites whom they now encountered were chased and killed, though one individual, Lieutenant Governor Bull, eluded the rebels and rode to spread the alarm. The slaves stopped in a large field late that afternoon, just before reaching the Edisto River. They had marched over ten miles and killed between twenty and twenty-five Whites.

Around four in the afternoon, somewhere between twenty and 100 whites had set out in armed pursuit. When they approached the rebels, the slaves fired two shots. The whites returned fire, bringing down fourteen of the slaves. By dusk, about thirty slaves were dead and at least thirty had escaped. Most were captured over the next month, then executed; the rest were captured over the following six months -- all except one who remained a fugitive for three years.

Uncomfortable with the increasing numbers of blacks for some time, the white colonists had been working on a Negro Act that would limit the privileges of slaves. This act was quickly finalized and approved after the Stono Rebellion. No longer would slaves be allowed to grow their own food, assemble in groups, earn their own money, or learn to read. Some of these restrictions had been in effect before the Negro Act, but had not been strictly enforced.

Andry's Rebellion *Secondary Source from Smithsonian Magazine online*

Read more:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/its-anniversary-1811-louisiana-slave-revolt-180957760/#0crE42Slex8YAxa7.99>

Two hundred and five years ago, on the night of January 8, 1811, more than 500 enslaved people took up arms in one of the largest slave rebellions in U.S. history. They carried cane knives (used to harvest sugar cane), hoes, clubs and some guns as they marched toward New Orleans chanting "Freedom or Death," writes Leon A. Waters for the Zinn Education Project.

The uprising began on the grounds of a plantation owned by Manuel Andry on the east side of the Mississippi, in a region called the German Coast of Louisiana. There, a slave driver named Charles Deslondes of Haitian descent, led a small band of slaves into the mansion of the plantation owners, where they wounded Andry and killed his son Gilbert. The group then armed themselves with muskets and ammunition from the plantation's basement. Some donned Andry's militia uniforms.

"Charles knew that the uniforms would lend the revolt authority, wedding their struggle with the imagery of the Haitian Revolution, whose leaders had famously adopted European military garb," reports historian Daniel Rasmussen in his book *American Uprising: The Untold Story of America's Largest Slave Revolt*, excerpted by NPR. Charles was inspired by the Haitian Revolution, which had succeeded less than a decade before and brought encouragement to those revolting in Louisiana that night.

After the attack on the Andry mansion, the group of revolutionaries started a two day march down River Road to New Orleans. Along the way they burned other plantations. The plan was to join with other revolutionaries in the city.

Official accounts at the time spun the fiction that the revolt was nearly a band of "brigands" out to pillage and plunder," writes Wendell Hassan Marsh for *The Root*. But this was the story of the victors— Rasmussen found through the course of his research, not the story of what happened. In reality, the revolt was carefully organized and it threatened to destabilize the institution of slavery in Louisiana.

To uncover the real story, Rasmussen pored through court records and plantation ledgers. "I realized that the revolt had been much larger—and come much closer to succeeding—than the planters and American officials let on," he tells Littice Bacon-Blood of the *Times-Picayune*. "Contrary to their letters, which are the basis for most accounts of the revolt, the slave army posed an existential threat to white control over the city of New Orleans."

Many rebels had copies of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man hidden in slave quarters and rebels had led smaller attacks in the region for years leading up to the revolt, Marsh writes for *The Root*. Among the ranks of the revolted included those with experience fighting in civil wars in Ghana and Angola. The plan was to establish a black

state along the banks of the Mississippi. But as the marching group's numbers swelled to more than 500 strong, U.S. federal troops and the slave owners' militia responded quickly.

On January 10, at Jacques Fortier's plantation, near what is now River Town in Kenner, federal troops forced the revolt to turn back, Bacon-Blood reports for *The Times-Picayune*. With the militia blocking the revolutionaries' retreat, that spelled the end of the revolt.

"It was really brutally put down," Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, an author and historian at Michigan State University, tells Bacon-Blood. "It was incredibly bloodthirsty in the way the elite put it down, cutting people into little pieces, displaying body parts." The brief battle killed dozens of the fighting slaves. The surviving leaders were rounded up to face a tribunal on January 13 and many were sentenced to death by firing squad.

"Their heads were cut off and placed on poles along the river in order to frighten and intimidate the other slaves," writes Waters for the Zinn Project. "This display of heads placed on spikes stretched over 60 miles."

The suppression of the extent of the rebellion kept the uprising from historical attention for decades. Hall calls it a kind of "historical amnesia" in the *Times-Picayune* piece. However on the 200th anniversary of the revolt, area museums and historical sites in Louisiana organized a year-long commemoration of the event. In time, the uprising may gain the recognition it deserves, thanks to the efforts of historians willing to sort the fiction from the reality.

The New York Conspiracy of 1741 *Secondary source from Encyclopedia Britannica*

New York slave rebellion of 1741, also called New York Conspiracy of 1741 or the Great Negro Plot of 1741, a supposed large-scale scheme plotted by Black slaves and poor white settlers to burn down and take over New York City. Possibly fueled by paranoia, the city's white population became convinced that a major rebellion was being planned. After a witch-hunt-like series of trials, no specific plot was ever uncovered.

The details of the events that took place in New York City in the spring and summer of 1741 are recorded in numerous historic and later accounts, many of which contain contradictory information. According to nearly all accounts, a fire on March 18, 1741, at Fort George—then Lieutenant Governor George Clarke's home—was the first in a series of fires in the city that may or may not have been set by slaves. The fires occurred at regular intervals and then with increased frequency until April 6, when four fires were set in a single day. Rumours raced across the city when a witness claimed to have seen a Black man, identified as a slave named Cuffee, running from the scene of one of the fires.

A month or so earlier that year, in a seemingly unrelated incident, three slaves had robbed a small store owned by a white couple, Robert and Rebecca Hogg. One of the slaves, Caesar, had brought his booty to a dockside tavern owned by John Hughson, who was known for dealing in stolen goods from slaves and for selling them alcohol. His tavern had a reputation as a meeting point for the city's deviants. Caesar and one of his partners in crime, a slave named Prince, were arrested. When it came time to investigate the fires, Daniel Horsmanden, a judge who was appointed to lead the investigation and preside over the robbery trials, was eager to uncover a plot and its perpetrators and therefore connected the fires to the burglary.

The notion of a conspiracy was brewing. Meanwhile overseas, England had been at war for the previous two years with Spain, inciting a fear of Spanish attack on New York City and a general sentiment of anti-Catholicism. Causing

widespread suspicion was a group of Black Spaniards who had been free citizens of Spain until they were captured by the British in the Caribbean and sold into slavery when they reached Manhattan in 1740. Harboring resentment, the Spaniards continued to declare themselves free and that, when captured, they should have become “prisoners of war,” not slaves. Thus, Roman Catholics, African-born slaves, and Spanish-born Blacks were all under suspicion.

A jury was impaneled on April 21, and Mary Burton, a young indentured servant at Hughson’s tavern, was brought to testify before the jury. Under duress, Burton testified that three slaves—Caesar, Prince, and Cuffee—along with a contingent of poor white settlers, had plotted to burn the fort and the city and kill its inhabitants. Burton also implicated a white prostitute named Peggy Kerry, who had ties to Caesar. Kerry was then forced to testify and implicated many Blacks in the conspiracy, and, on the basis of her testimony, those named were kept in custody. Those held in custody were also forced to provide testimony and name names, which they did.

In May Caesar and Prince were charged not with conspiracy but with burglary and were hanged. Kerry (who was pregnant with Caesar’s child), Hughson, and his wife were arrested next and were publicly executed in June. Hughson’s body (and possibly those of his wife and Kerry as well) was left hanging for all to observe. Still desperate to uncover a plot, Horsmanden offered rewards (of varying amounts, depending on the informant’s skin colour and status) to anyone who would provide evidence of a conspiracy. Over the course of the three-month investigation, some 150 people were arrested and “confessed” or testified. Burton continued her accusations throughout the summer, eventually accusing more than 20 white people, including a Latin teacher named John Ury who was accused of using his Catholic faith to influence the rebellion. By the end of summer, the hysteria had died down and the accusations stopped.

As a result of the rumours, false confessions, and finger-pointing, approximately 30 Blacks and 4 whites (the Hughsons, Kerry, and Ury) were executed, and some 80 more people, mostly Black but some white, were exiled. A journal written by Horsmanden in 1744 served as an important primary source on the proceedings of the 1741 conspiracy, revealing important details and offering valuable insight into the context in which the trials took place. In the 21st century, historians of the event were wary of Horsmanden’s factual accuracy, as his book was likely published as justification for his actions, and they remained agnostic about the actuality of a slave conspiracy.

Denmark Vesey Secondary Source from PBS.com

Denmark Vesey was a literate, skilled carpenter and leader among African Americans in Charleston, South Carolina. He was accused and convicted of being the ringleader of “the rising,” a major potential slave revolt planned for the city in June 1822; he was executed.

On May 30, 1822, George Wilson, “a favourite and confidential slave” informed his master of a planned insurrection that involved thousands of free and enslaved blacks who lived in and around Charleston.

Charleston authorities subsequently uncovered evidence of the most extensive black insurrection in American history, planned for July, 1822. The city’s suppression of the African Church, which boasted a membership of over three thousand in 1820, provided the catalyst for revolt; Denmark Vesey began using his position as a respected free man and Methodist leader to organize other free and enslaved blacks. Among Vesey’s co-conspirators was Gullah Jack Pritchard, an African priest from Mozambique. Monday Gell, another of his lieutenants, wrote two letters to the president of Santo Domingo seeking support for the insurrection.

Once the plot was betrayed, Charleston officials moved quickly to arrest and question the leaders. Following a lengthy trial, Vesey and thirty-six others were hanged. On the day of Vesey's execution, state militia and federal troops had to be called out to contain a demonstration by black supporters. Despite arrests and beatings, many blacks defied authorities by wearing mourning black as they witnessed the executions of the chief co-conspirators.

"This Far By Faith – Denmark Vesey," *Secondary Source from PBS.com*

In 1771, fourteen-year-old Denmark Vesey was transported from St. Thomas to Cape Francois by slave trader Captain Joseph Vesey. Upon a return trip to Cape Francois, Captain Vesey was forced to reclaim Denmark, who his master said was suffering from epileptic fits. Denmark accompanied Captain Vesey on his trading voyages until the Captain retired to Charleston, never again showing signs of epilepsy.

In 1799, Vesey won the lottery and bought his freedom for \$600. He could not purchase the freedom of his wife and children, however, and some claimed that this fact motivated his crusade to destroy the institution of slavery.

Vesey joined the newly formed African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1817. He became a "class leader," preaching to a small group in his home during the week. White Charlestonians constantly monitored the African church, disrupting services and arresting members. An angry Vesey began preaching from the Old Testament, particularly Exodus, and taught followers that they were the New Israelites, the chosen people whose enslavement God would punish with death.

In 1822, Vesey and other leaders from the African Church began plotting a rebellion. His chief lieutenant was an East African priest named Gullah Jack, who led conspirators in prayer and rituals and gave them amulets to protect them in battle. Vesey's theology of liberation, combined with Gullah Jack's African mysticism, inspired potential participants, and word of the rebellion grew. Vesey set the date for revolt on July 14, and men from Charleston and surrounding plantations planned to seize Charleston's arsenals and guard houses, kill the Governor, set fire to the city, and kill every white man they saw. But in June, several nervous slaves leaked the plot to their masters, and Charleston authorities began arresting leaders. Vesey was captured on June 22, and he and the conspirators were brought to trial. Despite torture and the threat of execution, the men refused to give up their followers. On July 2nd, Denmark Vesey and five other men were hanged. Gullah Jack was executed several days later, with the total number of executions reaching 35 by August 9th.

In the aftermath of the Vesey rebellion, the African Church was burned down and authorities passed a series of laws further restricting the rights of Charleston slaves. Vesey became a martyr for African-Americans and a symbol for the abolitionist movement, while the increasingly militant politics of white America dragged the country toward Civil War.

Nat Turner's Rebellion *Secondary source from Encyclopedia Virginia*

read more at: https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Revolt_Nat_Turner_s_1831

On the evening of August 21–22, 1831, an enslaved preacher and self-styled prophet named Nat Turner launched the most deadly slave revolt in the history of the United States. Over the course of a day in Southampton County, Turner and his allies killed fifty-five white men, women, and children as the rebels

made their way toward Jerusalem, Virginia (now Courtland). Less than twenty-four hours after the revolt began, the rebels encountered organized resistance and were defeated in an encounter at James Parker's farm. Following this setback, Turner and other rebels scrambled to reassemble their forces. The next day, a series of defeats led to the effective end of the revolt. Whites quickly and brutally reasserted their control over Southampton County, killing roughly three dozen blacks without trials. Within a few days of the revolt, white leaders in Southampton became increasingly confident that the revolt had been suppressed and worked to limit the extralegal killing of blacks. Instead, white leaders made sure that the remaining suspected slaves were tried, which also meant that the white slave owners would receive compensation from the state for condemned slaves, a benefit that the state did not extend to slave owners who owned suspected rebels killed without trials. This effort, which reached a climax with the declaration of martial law in Southampton a week after the revolt began, meant that Southampton court system would ultimately decide what to do with suspected slave rebels.

Trials began on August 31, 1831, and the majority of trials were completed within a month. By the time that the trials were finished the following spring, thirty slaves and one free black had been condemned to death. Of these, nineteen were executed in Southampton: Governor John Floyd, following the recommendations of the court in Southampton, commuted twelve sentences. The rest of those convicted, along with 300 free blacks from Southampton County, agreed to be exiled to Liberia in Africa. Turner was hanged on November 11, 1831. Turner himself had eluded whites throughout September and into October when two slaves spotted him close to where the revolt began. Once detected, Turner was forced to move, but he was unable to elude the renewed manhunt. He was captured on October 30. While in jail awaiting trial, Turner spoke freely with whites about the revolt. Local lawyer Thomas R. Gray approached Turner with a plan to take down his confessions. The *Confessions of Nat Turner* was published within weeks of the Turner's execution on November 11, 1831, and remains one of the most important sources for historians working on slavery in the United States. The revolt had important ramifications outside of Southampton, as several southern communities feared that slaves in their community were part of the revolt. In Richmond, Thomas Jefferson Randolph—the grandson of Thomas Jefferson—tried but failed to convince the General Assembly to enact a plan that would have put the state on the path to gradual emancipation.

Abolitionists remembered the revolt as an important example of both slaves' hate for the system of slavery and their bravery. The cultural legacy of the revolt is still vibrant; the revolt remains the clearest example of overt resistance in the United States to the system of slavery. Nat Turner's rebellion led to the passage of a series of new laws. The Virginia legislature actually debated ending slavery, but chose instead to impose additional restrictions and harsher penalties on the activities of both enslaved and free African Americans. Other slave states followed suit, restricting the rights of free and enslaved blacks to gather in groups, travel, preach, and learn to read and write.