

# African American History 400+ years of Resistance, Resilience, Power, and Pride

Today you will become smarter in the Little George ship revolt  
and Bisa Butler, an artist activist.

# Standards/SJ Standards

## History Social Science Standards CA

5.4 Students understand the political, religious, social, and economic institutions that evolved in the colonial era.

6. Describe the introduction of slavery into America, the responses of slave families to their condition, the ongoing struggle between proponents and opponents of slavery, and the gradual institutionalization of slavery in the South.

## Teaching Hard History Standards

### Essential Knowledge 15

In every place and time, enslaved people sought freedom.

15.E Escape was difficult and rare, but some people managed to flee. Enslaved people who escaped were known as “fugitive slaves,” and people chased after them, since there was often a cash reward for returning enslaved people who ran away.

15.F Enslaved people pursued freedom in many ways other than escape, including saving money to buy their freedom and their relatives’ freedom, and turning to the courts to seek freedom.

## Social Justice Standards

13. Students will analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today.
14. Students will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics.
15. Students will identify figures, groups, events and a variety of strategies and philosophies relevant to the history of social justice around the world.

15.B Some enslaved people tried to rebel, but these actions were difficult and mostly unsuccessful because people in power wanted slavery to continue and had many more resources (including weapons) to put down rebellions.



20 and odd

AFRICANS' ARRIVAL IN 1619

# A, E, I, O, U, 1, 2

Use this approach to help read words with multiple syllables.

- 1.
2. Place an X under each A, E, I, O, U
3. Count the letters between the X's
4. Split between:  
(X and X) example: jo/vi/al  
(X and 1) example: te/na/cious  
(1 and 2) example: bal/lad

Do not separate blends or word groupings that need each other.  
ous, qu, bi, cl, dr, pr, cial, tion

Abandoned

Generations

Uprisings

Ventilated



## Stolen

And the white people took them anyway.  
Kidnapped them.


Baptized them in the name of their god.  
Stamped them with new names.

*Ours is no immigration story.*

They did not get to pack bags stuffed  
with cherished things, with the doll grandmama  
had woven from tall grass,  
with the baby blanket handed down  
from generation to generation all the way back,  
so far back that it carried the scent of the ancestors.

They could not hug their fathers and mothers,  
daughters and sons,  
hearts thumping in rhythm,  
clinging to that final sweetness before the parting.  
No promises, whispered from mouth to ear,  
of seeing each other soon.





Just wails and sobs. Confusion and  
wrists worn raw from shackles made of iron,  
feet split and bloody from the 200-mile march  
along the Kwanza River.

They had no things. But they had their minds.  
The old ways, the harvest songs, the just-right mix of herbs  
etched in their memories.

They had their bodies. Histories and bloodlines  
and drums pulsing in their veins.  
With trembling fingers  
they braided seeds into their hair, defiantly hiding  
tiny pieces of home  
to plant one day  
in new soils.

No matter what some say,  
the people fought.

And the white people took them anyway.  
Forced them into the bottom of an evil ship,  
to sail to a "New World"  
they had no desire to see.

*Ours is no immigration story.*

# The Little George Ship Revolt



# The Little George Slave Ship Revolt





The *Little George* Ship Revolt took place on the British ship *Little George* in June 1730. The little-known revolt was one of the most successful uprisings of captured Africans on the high seas in history. The revolt occurred five days after the *Little George* had sailed from the Coast of Guinea to bring captured Africans to the British North American colony of Rhode Island. The revolt began as several Africans were able to slip out of their iron chains, overpower the crew, and sail the ship back to the continent of Africa and specifically to the Sierra Leone River where they abandoned the ship.

On June 1, 1730, Captain George Scott sailed his ship, the *Little George*, carrying ninety-six captured Africans from the Bonnana Islands off the Coast of Guinea (West Africa) to Rhode Island. There the captured Africans were to be sold as slaves. Five days into the Atlantic crossing, the captives, already mistreated by the ship's crew and packed and chained down in heavy shackles in the dark and poorly ventilated lower deck of the ship, rose in revolt. On June 6, 1730, around 4:00 a.m. several captives freed themselves from their iron shackles and broke through the bulkhead of the ship. Getting on the ship's deck, they seized weapons and killed three of the crew's watchmen who were attempting to alert other crew members and Captain Scott.

Momodu, S. (2020, August 23). *Little George Ship Revolt (1730)*. BlackPast.org.  
<https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/little-george-ship-revolt-1730/>



Some of the captives made a bomb out of gunpowder pressed into a bottle, which they threatened to ignite. Recognizing that the explosion would have damaged and perhaps sunk the ship, the crew surrendered to the African captives. Without any sailing or navigation experience, the Africans, now in control of the ship, were able to turn it around and sail it back to the African continent. After a few days, the *Little George* reached the mouth of the Sierra Leone River where both the Africans and the British crew abandoned the ship. Later rescued by another slave ship, Captain George Scott, described in detail the revolt, thus leaving a record for later generations.

Momodu, S. (2020, August 23). *Little George Ship Revolt (1730)*. BlackPast.org. <https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/little-george-ship-revolt-1730/>



I George Scott the Subscriber, of Newport  
Whool Island Master of the Sloop Called the Little  
George Sailed from the Bonnana Islands, the  
Westward part of the Coast of Africa on the first  
Day of June 1730 and on the 6<sup>th</sup> of said month  
at half an hour past four of the Clock in the  
Morning being a boat 100 Leagues distant from  
The Land some of the Slaves on Board the whole  
Number being three, the Crew consists of the Dutch  
upon deck) broke their Irons and got thro' the  
Walk head of the deck and hearing a noise with  
groans exceeding heavy strokes given to my  
Riffler directly and fired up the Shuttle upon  
which all of the Slaves that were low Men forward  
excepting 2 or 3 men who seem'd to laugh at the  
Cruelty of the Act and defiance of us being but a  
four men and a boy a boat 40 years of age Left  
I live) who led the Shuttle bur us and oblig'd us  
to keep the Cabin they having murder'd John Harris  
The Doctor and two of the Sailors at three first  
Breast whom they threw overboard and passing by  
The Companion to view us we shot two more Slaves  
On so sudden a surprize we at a loss what to do  
But consultation together fill'd two Wood bottles with  
Powder putting fuses to them in order to send among  
them with a design, at the same instant of time to  
flue out upon them and either suppress them or lose  
Our lives but just as we were putting our design in  
Execution one of the Slaves hit full an ax either  
Thro accident or design) which broke the bottle  
As my self was sitting fire to the fuses and  
that taking fire with a Log of wood in the Cabin  
blew up the deck blew open the Cabin door and  
Windows and burnt the man that had the fuse in his  
hand almost to death and my self very much hurt  
Therby discharg'd all our fire arms & thro' our

## Narrative of Slave Revolt on Ship off Africa

The image to the left is a page from the testimony of Captain George Scott who lived to tell the tale of the enslaved Africans on his ship, Little George. In 1730, they slipped out of their irons and fought back, locking Scott and his crew in the cabin while they sailed back to Africa, abandoned the ship, and escaped.

## Attempts at Freedom: Fighting Back on Rhode Island's Slave Trading Ships

Essay by Jennifer Galpern, Research Services Manager, Rhode Island Historical Society

One of the ways enslaved Africans attempted to escape was through uprisings aboard the ships on which they were held captive. Documents in archives reveal that ship owners purchased insurance in preparation for possible uprisings, and newspapers published articles about uprisings.<sup>[1]</sup> Enslavers even noted where the so-called "ideal" slaves could be found: "Slaves differ in the goodness; those from the Gold Coast are accounted best, being cleanest limbed, and more docile by our Settlements than others; but then they are, for that very reason, more prompt to Revenge, and murder the Instruments of their Slavery, and also apter in the means to compass it."<sup>[2]</sup> Enslavers often shared where to obtain the "docile" captives. While there are many stories of uprisings, in most cases enslaved Africans were not able to take over the ship. These stories show how enslaved people, though kidnapped and in chains, practiced agency and fought for their own self-preservation.

Cloze Passage for Comprehension: Fill in the blanks to make the poem make sense.

ocean, land, resignation, water

They say our people were born on the \_\_\_\_\_.

When it occurred, no one can say for certain. Perhaps it was in the second week, or the third, but surely by the fourth, when they had not seen their \_\_\_\_\_ or any land for so many days that they lost count. It was after the fear had turned to despair and the despair to \_\_\_\_\_ and the resignation gave way, finally, to resolve.

They knew then that they would not hug their grandmothers again, or share a laugh with a cousin during his nuptials, or sing their baby softly to sleep with the same lullabies that their mothers had once sung to them.

The teal eternity of the Atlantic \_\_\_\_\_ had severed them so completely that it was as if nothing had ever existed before, that everything they ever knew had simply vanished from the earth.

## Discussion Questions

What is a revolt and what makes a successful one?

What made the Little George revolt so successful?



**Fluency Practice** Practice reading the text below with a partner. The goal is to read the text with 100% accuracy. The words in red are from the A, E, I, O, U, 1, 2 List.

**In 1776, the nation was founded on the ideal of democracy. In 1619, when enslaved Africans first arrived in what would become the United States, black people began the fight to make that ideal a reality. Released on Aug. 23, 2019.**

Nikole Hannah-Jones

They say our people were born on the water.

When it occurred, no one can say for certain. Perhaps it was in the second week, or the third, but surely by the fourth, when they had not seen their land or any land for so many days that they lost count. It was after the fear had turned to despair and the despair to resignation and the resignation gave way, finally, to resolve.

They knew then that they would not hug their grandmothers again, or share a laugh with a cousin during his nuptials, or sing their baby softly to sleep with the same lullabies that their mothers had once sung to them.

The teal eternity of the Atlantic Ocean had severed them so completely that it was as if nothing had ever existed before, that everything they ever knew had simply vanished from the earth.

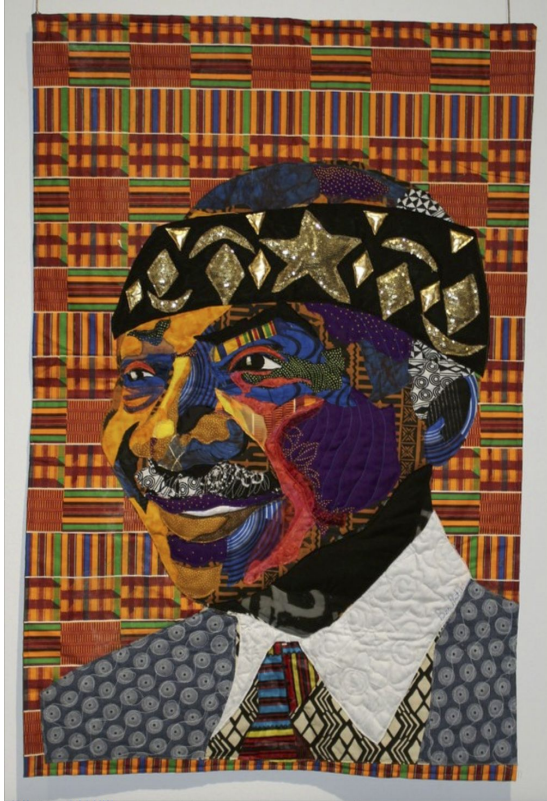
**Writing Tips** Use the following tips to complete your writing using the texts and the videos. Remember to **include what you learned** about the topic. Also, **share your thinking about what you learned**.

Using the texts and videos, write about the Little George Slave Revolt.

- Write what you learned about (topic) from the examples, the reading and the videos.
- Write what you will do with what you have learned.
- What thoughts or questions do you have after today's lesson?

[Writing Structure- summary sentences](#)

# Joy: Artist Activist Bisa Butler



“This is a portrait of my father Dr. A. Zachary Yamba. He was born in Ghana in 1938 in the days when the country was still known as The Gold Coast. When he was a boy first registering for school the Catholic missionaries made all the little African children choose western names. From that day on my father was known as Zachary Yamba, not Zakani Yamba. He is royalty to me as all Fathers are to their daughters. He was born in Ghana and came to the US on an academic scholarship. His roots are humble and as a boy he played soccer barefoot, and with a tennis ball. He worked very hard and became the president of a community college for 30 years. Now he is retired and is one of the biggest influences on my life. I have him here with his Kente cloth behind him and woven through him. On his head is the crown of a Ghanaian King.”  
-Bisa Butler

## Bisa Butler: Quilting for Culture



## REVIEW: Bisa Butler-Portraits

