

RIDING THE TIGER, THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE



"I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return."

— W.H. Auden, September 1, 1939



I am primarily concerned, as a historian, with the servile insurrection that "Captain" John Brown was attempting to instigate at the Harpers Ferry federal arsenal in 1859. My contention will be that normal academic history writing is retrospective in nature, done in an awareness of actual outcomes and consumed by an audience driven by presentist concerns, and that as a result of this "ante-knowledge" (to coin a term), normal academic history writing presents an incomplete picture of the alternatives that had beforehand been available. Specifically, the fact that this Harpers Ferry situation resolved itself into a sectional Civil War, and that what our academic historians now know about is this fratricidal sectional struggle that actually did come about, is causing them to overlook the raw fact that the situation might well have resolved itself instead into a racial genocide similar to the one that actually occurred in our northern coastlands in 1676, known as "King Phillip's War" or might well have resolved itself instead into a class struggle similar to the one that almost occurred in the our coastal southlands in 1676, known as "Bacon's Rebellion" —and that for many of the white Americans



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

who had some advance knowledge of what John Brown was planning, such a racial genocide or such a class struggle would have been much to be preferred over our actual "civil war" brother-against-brother, white-on-white fratricide -this servile insurrection which John Brown was attempting to initiate, followed inevitably by a racial genocide, must have been a very acceptable outcome in their contemplation, an outcome that would have solved what they regarded as America's "negro problem" - resolved it once and for all.

America has had a series of race wars, first the war upon the Pequot tribe, then what is termed "King Phillip's War," then the attempt at servile insurrection by Nat Turner that was nipped in the bud in Virginia, then the attempt at servile insurrection by Denmark Vesey that was nipped in the bud in South Carolina, then the "Sioux Uprising" under Little Crow in Minnesota, then the "Ghost Dancers," etc. These struggles have always worked out very well for our white people, who always triumph in the end. So why are we so sure -given the unchallenged fact that the Secretary of War had been amply prewarned- that John Brown's plot was one that had been entirely unexpected by the US federal government, sprung as a surprise, a deep dark conspiracy?

It seems to me very plausible, given the number of people who had one or another piece of advance knowledge of what Brown was up to, that this thing actually came about not because it was unexpected and unwanted, but because it was very much expected and very much wanted.

(You know, and I know, that President George W. Bush was briefed beforehand on the likelihood that Osama bin Laden would strike somewhere somehow soon inside the United States of America, and you know and I know that "W" did nothing whatever with this information, just as the Secretary of War in 1859 did nothing whatever with the information that John Brown was going to attack a federal arsenal in order to seize weapons in order to stage a servile insurrection. You know, and I know, also, that the NeoCons already had an office in the Pentagon, in which they were developing a laundry list of must-do items which they were going to spring on the citizenry the moment we were infuriated by an attack upon our nation - must-do items such as our seemed-like-a-good-idea-at-the-time invasion of Iraq. Of what relevance, therefore, is the conceit that the attack on the Twin Towers was a "sneak attack"? - Is this not of the same relevance as the conceit that John Brown's attack on Harpers Ferry was a "sneak attack"?)

**"NARRATIVE HISTORY" AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

135 BCE

Rome's first [servile insurrection](#) began when [slaves](#) on large estates in Sicily revolted under the leadership of a Syrian named Eunus, styling himself "King Antiochus."

THE PAX ROMANA

269 The first coining of silver at Rome.
264 The first Punic war begins, and continues 23 years. The chronology of the Arundelian marbles composed.
260 The Romans first concern themselves in naval affairs, and defeat the Carthaginians at sea.
237 Hamilcar the Carthaginian causes his son Hannibal, at nine years old, to swear eternal enmity to the Romans.
218 The second Punic war begins, and continues 17 years. Hannibal passes the Alps, and defeats the Romans in several battles; but being amused by his women, does not improve his victories by the storming of Rome.
190 The first Roman army enters Asia, and from the spoils of Antiochus brings the Asiatic luxury first to Rome.
168 Perseus defeated by the Romans, which ends the Macedonian kingdom.
167 The first library erected at Rome, of books brought from Macedonia.
163 The Government of Judea under the Maccabees begins, and continues 126 years.
146 Carthage, the rival to Rome, is razed to the ground by the Romans.
135 The history of the Apocrypha ends.
52 Julius Cæsar makes his first expedition into Britain.
47 The battle of Pharsalia, between Cæsar and Pompey, in which the latter is defeated.
The Alexandrian library, consisting of 400,000 valuable books, burnt by accident.
45 The war of Africa, in which Cato kills himself.
The solar year introduced by Cæsar.

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

134 BCE

From this year into 132 BCE, the 1st of the [Roman](#) “Servile Wars” — putting down a [slave](#) uprising in Sicily.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

THE PAX ROMANA

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

132 BCE

Rome's 1st slave war ended with the capture of the Syrian Eunus, otherwise known as King Antiochus. He was then, as you might imagine, savagely executed, along with his supporters.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

THE PAX ROMANA

**LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?
— NO, THAT'S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN'S STORIES.
LIFE ISN'T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.**



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

103 BCE

Rome's 2d slave war began when slaves in Sicily revolted under the leadership of Tryphon and Athenion.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

THE PAX ROMANA

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

102 BCE

The 2d of the [Roman](#) “Servile Wars” would go on into 99 BCE — putting down another [slave](#) uprising in Sicily. (The 1st such [servile insurrection](#) had occurred in 135-132 BCE.)

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

99 BCE

Rome's 2d slave war ended after 4 years when Consul M. Aquillius subdued the slave army.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

THE PAX ROMANA



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

73 BCE

For the 3d and final Roman “Servile War,” during this year and the following two years, Crassus and Pompey



put down a [slave](#) uprising led by a popular former [gladiator](#), the Thracian prisoner of war [Spartacus](#) who had escaped along with about 70 other slave gladiators in training from the training camp of Lentulus Batiatus at Capua. (The 1st such servile wars had occurred in 134-132 BCE, and the 2d in 102-99 BCE.)



COLOSSEUM

After failing to break through northern Italy to the safety of the barbarian world, the gladiators fighting in this 3d servile war would take refuge on the slopes near [Mount Vesuvius](#) with the intent of holding out as long as possible before they were defeated in battle and then crucified.

In the 2004 made-for-TV version of the Howard Fast epic, Goran Visnjic offers the following as what the escaped gladiators were fighting for:

“There’ll be no more slaves and no more masters.”



That would amount, of course, to the sheerest presentism. Spartacus might have been able to conceive of an alternative universe in which he was the master, and somebody else the slave, but it would never have crossed his mind that there might be an alternative universe in which there were neither slaves nor masters.

As Sir Charles Lyell would point out, this volcano actually posed its maximal danger to the [Romans](#) in general not when lavas and poisonous gases were erupting from its crater in 79 CE, but when an escaped slave established its more quiescent side crater as his fortress:



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

When Spartacus encamped his army of ten thousand gladiators in the old extinct crater of Vesuvius, the volcano was more justly a subject of terror to Campania than it has ever been since the rekindling of its fires.



"The capacity to get free is nothing; the capacity to be free, that is the task."

— André Gide, THE IMMORALIST
translation Richard Howard
NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970, page 7



(Some of the buildings that would be excavated in the

SERVILE INSURRECTION

THE PAX ROMANA

ruins of [Pompeii](#) had been originally erected during this timeframe of the Servile Wars.)

**ESSENCE IS BLUR. SPECIFICITY,
THE OPPOSITE OF ESSENCE,
IS OF THE NATURE OF TRUTH.**

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SERVILE INSURRECTION

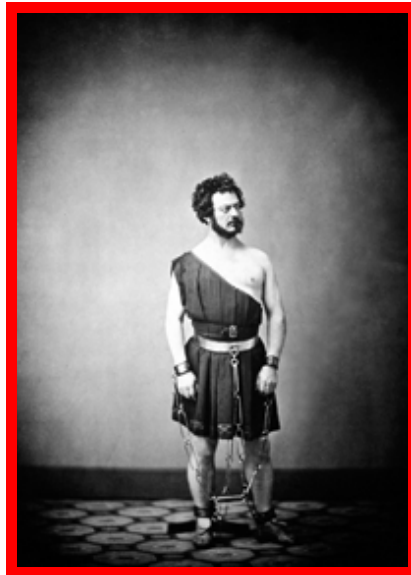
SLAVE REVOLT



72 BCE

Cato the Younger enlisted in the Roman army raised to fight against the slave army of Spartacus.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

71 BCE



Yet another battle involving our favorite pushy people, the [Romans](#): at the Silarius River the legions of M. Licinius Crassus wounded [Spartacus](#) in the thigh and then finished him off, and dispersed the [slave](#) army he had led. Pompey returned from the Hispanic provinces to mop up the remnants, restoring [the Pax Romana](#). Some 6,000 survivors of the final battle would be rounded up and crucified alongside the Via Appia between Capua and Rome — which according to a back-of-the-envelope calculation would have resulted in approximately a cross each 120 running feet. Spartacus's body would not be distinguishable, among the corpses.



In an encampment outside of [Rome](#), according to director Stanley Kubrick, general Lawrence Olivier confronted captured slave/gladiator Kirk Douglas. “I am Marcus Licinius Crassus,” Olivier declared, “You must answer when I speak to you.” When Douglas wouldn’t say his lines, Olivier slapped him, so then of course Douglas spat in his face. (When you go to the movies, you really do go — which means of course that movies are a part of reality.)

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1522

The [slaves](#) on the large Caribbean island which local Arawaks had known as Haiti but which the Spaniards were terming *La Isla Española*, or *Hispaniola*, staged a large-scale uprising (within the following 31 years there would be at least 10 more of these).

SERVILE INSURRECTION



"I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return."

— [W.H. Auden](#), [September 1, 1939](#)



Because it failed to dislodge the Spanish from the island or change their views about slavery, the rebellion was, from a European perspective, a failure. From an African perspective, though, the revolt was a qualified success, as the Spanish usually ignored slaves who escaped into the wilderness. (It was cheaper and easier to buy new slaves than to hunt down and recapture old ones.)



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1527

There was a [slave](#) revolt on the island of Puerto Rico in the Caribbean.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1533

Slaves on the large Caribbean island which local Arawaks had known as Haiti but which the Spaniards were terming *La Isla Española*, or *Hispaniola*, staged an uprising which was suppressed with a great deal of bloodshed.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1537

Slaves on the large Caribbean island which local Arawaks had known as Haiti but which the Spaniards were terming *La Isla Española*, or *Hispaniola*, staged yet another uprising.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1548

The native population of the large Caribbean island which local Arawaks had known as Haiti but which the Spaniards were terming *La Isla Española*, or *Hispaniola*, had fallen to fewer than 500, while the black population had swelled tremendously. At this point Hispaniola experienced yet another of its **slave** uprisings.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1549

Basically it was not freedom of religion, but the dangerous notion of economic enslavement not at all based upon race, which provoked the people of Norfolk to demonstrate against enclosures of English common land. But of course as soon as a leader, Robert Ket, had been captured and executed, the some 16,000 protesters dispersed.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1630

The 1st [servile insurrection](#) to take place in an English colony, on Santa Catalina in the Eastern Caribbean.
A Puritan colonist there advised the slaves that slavery was wrong and that they might legitimately abscond.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1638

October 12, Friday (Old Style) about 9AM: A relatively minor incident occurred on Noddle's Island in Boston Harbor, land which is now part of East [Boston](#). [John Josselyn](#), a guest of "Mr. Samuel Maverick, the only hospitable man (as he says) in all the country, giving entertainment to all comers gratis," has filed the following incident report:

The second of October about 9 of the clock in the morning Mr. Maverick's negro came to my chamber window, and in her own Countrey language and tune sung very loud and shrill. Going out to her she used a great deal of respect towards me, and willingly would have expressed her grief in English, but I apprehended it by her countenance and deportment, whereupon I repaired to my host to learn of him the cause, and resolved to intreat him on her behalf for that I understood before that she had been a Queen in her own Countrey, and observed a very dutiful garb used toward her by another Negro who was her main. Mr. Maverick was desirous to have a breed of Negroes, and therefore seeing she would not yield by persuasion to company with a Negro young man he had in his house, he commanded him, will'd she, nill'd she, to go to bed with her, but she kickt him out again. This she took in high disdain beyond her slavery, and this was the cause of her grief.

The story ends at this point. We have never learned this defenseless woman's name, or whether her rape and impregnation was eventually accomplished. We do know that, queen in her own country or not, Mr. Maverick had the local law entirely on his side. We know that, even if he had had that young man hold his "Negro woman" down while he did the filthy deed **himself**, the law of the Bay colony would still have been entirely at his command. Since he owned her he owned, also, her **usufruct** (this is not a dirty word but is the actual legal term — one still in use in Massachusetts, and elsewhere, in the grand old U S of A).

Notice carefully, how utterly alone this woman remained. Mr. Josselyn was not going to be the white knight who rode to her rescue — he was not, for instance, going to help her steal away and take her back to England with him and there situate her in some tolerable domestic-service situation. He was going to leave her as a [slave](#) to the tender mercies of her white owner, and go back to England and relate the story of the tragedy of her black life as a salacious tidbit.

Notice carefully, also, that although this situation involved few people and although it is still quite early in America's history, we have already here the key element of a [servile insurrection](#), to wit, that no proportionate response or protest would be of any avail, that the only responses that might be effective would of necessity be disproportionate (such as the poisoning of this family, the torching of the house) and would inevitably produce the most extreme retribution.



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1639

[Servile insurrection](#) in the French part of St. Kitts.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1640

Over the years in the British West Indies, until 1713, there would be seven serious [servile insurrections](#):

1640-1713	seven slave revolts in the islands of the British West Indies
1655	With Jamaica in transition between Spanish control and English control, some 1,500 slaves escaped into the mountains to form maroon communities.
1656	Juan de Bolas led many of the escaped slaves in the maroon communities of the mountains of Jamaica down to the plains and the coast with a deal in which the English granted pardon and freedom. Many maroons, however, would elect to remain in the mountains.
1668	“Lobby’s rebellion” on Jamaica — several hundred black slaves escaped to the mountains.
1725-1740	1st Maroon War on Jamaica
March 1, 1738-1739	The 1st Maroon War on Jamaica ended in a treaty guaranteeing freedom for the maroons, the deal being that henceforward they would capture and turn in for a reward any new slave or bond-laborer escapees.
1760	slave uprising on Jamaica
1776	slave uprising on Jamaica
1784	slave uprising on Jamaica
1795-1796	2d Maroon War on Jamaica
1823	slave uprising on Jamaica
1824	slave uprising on Jamaica
1831	slave uprising on Jamaica



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1641

In [Nieuw-Amsterdam](#), overseer Jacob Stoffelson had city [slaves](#) removing dead hogs from the streets.

In a double wedding two pairs of [slaves](#), Anthony van Angola and Catalina van Angola, and Lucie d'Angola and Laurens van Angola, were married in the Dutch Reformed Church.

When 8 [slaves](#) were suspected of having murdered a 9th, lots were drawn and 1 of the 8, Manuel the property of Gerrit de Reus, who drew the short straw so to speak, was assigned to be hanged. The other 7 accused –Big Manuel, Little Manuel, Paulo d'Angola, Simon Congo, Anthony Portuguese, and two others for whom we do not have names– were pardoned. When Manuel's rope broke spectators pled for his life, successfully, and so this lucky dude got to keep on being a [slave](#).

SERVILE INSURRECTION

NO-ONE'S LIFE IS EVER NOT DRIVEN PRIMARILY BY HAPPENSTANCE





SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1649

Servile insurrection on the island of Barbados.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1655

[Admiral Sir William Penn](#) (father of [Friend William Penn](#)) subjugated the Spanish island of Jamaica to the rule of Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, his force of 5,000 men meeting with but little resistance.

A

Chronological TABLE

*Of the most remarkable passages in that part of
America, known to us by the name of NEW-
ENGLAND.*

Anno Dom.

1655. *Jamaica Taken by the English.*

As this kerfuffle of hegemony among the white folks was being transacted, with the island's Spanish settlers fleeing to [Cuba](#), various of the [slaves](#) of the Spanish residents seized upon their one golden opportunity. Escaping into the mountains of the interior of the island, they there established their own "Maroon" settlements. Admiral Sir William Penn thus unwittingly freed more black slaves, than his high-principled Quaker son ever would! Robert Sedgwick, born in Woburn, Bedfordshire, England in about 1611 and baptized on May 6, 1613, who had settled at Charlestown in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1635 and become a successful merchant there, for many years had represented Charlestown in the General Court and had helped organize the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, of which he had been the captain during 1640. He had during 1652 been the commander of all the Massachusetts militia, and had supervised the construction of the 1st fort at Boston. Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell had promoted him to major general, making him the first Major General of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. With John Winthrop, Jr., and others, he had established in 1643/1644 the first ironworks in the North America. In 1654 he had driven the French from the Penobscot region and Fort Pentagouet. In this year this Robert Sedgwick accompanied this British naval expedition against Jamaica, and would be made Governor General of the island (he would die there).

CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

Within a few years Spain would have abandoned all efforts to recover this colony and the English settlers would be growing crops such as [tobacco](#), [cotton](#) and [cocoa](#), and logging off the [indigo](#) wood. However, it would be privateering and [piracy](#) that would help Port Royale (Kingston) become one of the richest towns in the Americas as well as most certainly the most notorious:



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

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SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

- 1610 Henry IV. is murdered at Paris by Ravaillac, a priest.
- 1611 Baronets first created in England by James I.
- 1614 Napier of Marcheston, in Scotland, invents the logarithms.
Sir Hugh Middleton brings the New River to London, from Ware.
- 1616 The first permanent settlement in Virginia.
- 1619 Dr. W. Harvey, an Englishman, discovers the doctrine of the circulation of the blood.
- 1620 The broad silk manufactory from raw silk introduced into England.
- 1621 New England planted by the Puritans.
- 1625 King James dies, and is succeeded by his son, Charles I.
The island of Barbadoes, the first English settlement in the West Indies, is planted.
- 1632 The battle of Lutzen, in which Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden, and head of the protestants in Germany, is killed,
- 1635 Province of Maryland planted by lord Baltimore.
Regular posts established from London to Scotland, Ireland, &c.
- 1640 King Charles disoblige his Scottish subjects, on which their army, under general Lesley, enters England, and takes Newcastle, being encouraged by the malcontents in England.
- 1641 The massacre in Ireland, when 40,000 English protestants were killed.
- 1642 King Charles impeaches five members, who had opposed his arbitrary measures, which begins the civil war in England.
- 1643 Excise on beer, ale, &c. first imposed by parliament.
- 1649 Charles I. beheaded at Whitehall, January 30, aged 49.
- 1654 Cromwell assumes the protectorship.
- 1655 The English, under admiral Penn, take Jamaica from the Spaniards.
- 1658 Cromwell dies, and is succeeded in the protectorship by his son Richard.
- 1660 King Charles II. is restored by Monk, commander of the army, after an exile of twelve years in France and Holland.

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1656

A slave revolt in Guadeloupe was led by Angolans.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

Juan de Bolas led many of the escaped slaves in the maroon communities of the mountains of Jamaica down to the plains and the coast with a deal in which the English granted them pardon and freedom. Many of the maroons, however, would elect to remain in the mountains:

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SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1675

Friend [William Edmundson](#), who had visited Barbados with Friend [George Fox](#), returned to the islands to preach against whites holding blacks in “ignorance and under oppression.” The white planters of Barbados uncovered what they considered to be evidence of a planned slave uprising. The Anglicans who controlled the Assembly passed a law to “restrain the too frequent wanderings and meetings of Negroes,” and to forbid the island’s “Quakers from bringing Negroes to their meetings,” and to outlaw the instruction of black children alongside white children in Quaker religious schools. Also enacted was an ordinance specifically prohibiting any white person who had not lived for a full year in the islands from holding any religious communications with any black islander.

Faced with this reaction, the Quaker slaveholders of Barbados attempted to reassure their fellow white plantation owners, that there was nothing to fear in their softness and compassion for their black slaves. While it was true enough, that the [Quakers](#) tried to treat their slaves well, they pointed out that they were as eager as any other white men, to suppress the possibility of [servile insurrection](#). They pointed out how diligent they had been in “patrolling in our persons and horses” ever since the day of “the last wicked contrivance of the Negroes, which the Lord by his witness in the heart made known for the preservation of the island in inhabitants.” Yes, these Quakers did not believe in war — but yes, these Quakers did believe in a strong and effective police presence! The serving class must be kept servile!¹

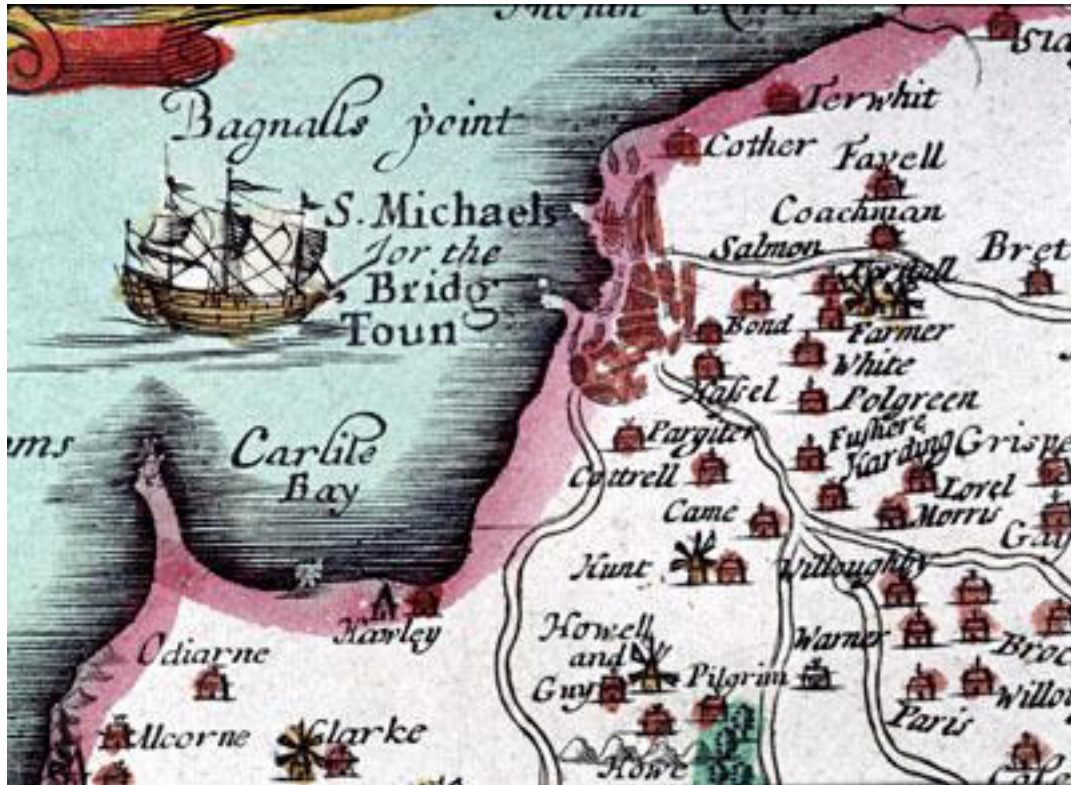
1. Legally, there was a distinction between a slaveowner and a slaveholder. The owner of a slave might rent the custody and use of that slave out for a year, in which case the distinction would arise and be a meaningful one in law, since the other party to such a transaction would be the holder but not the owner. However, in this Kouroo database, I will ordinarily be deploying the term “slaveholder” as the normative term, as we are no longer all that concerned with the making of such fine economic distinctions but are, rather, concerned almost exclusively with the human issues involved in the enslavement of other human beings. I use the term “slaveholder” in preference to “slaveowner” not only because no human being can **really** own another human being but also because it is important that slavery never be defined as the legal ownership of one person by another — in fact not only had human slavery existed before the first such legislation but also it has continued long since we abolished all legal deployment of the term “slave.”

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SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

In this year Richard Ford prepared a map of the principle settled portion of the island of Barbados:





SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1678

In the Peace of Nijmegen, the English gave the Dutch-Aruba Curacao, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, Saba, and half of St. Martin.

A “[slave](#) mutiny” was reported and martial law was enforced on Jamaica.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1679

There was a [slave](#) revolt in Haiti.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1683

The Rye House plot in England.

On the island of Jamaica in the Caribbean, a conspiracy to create [servile insurrection](#) was detected and promptly exterminated.

The East India Company instructed its governor on [St. Helena](#), John Blackmore, to prepare a Court of Judicature. The disused Market Place near Fort James was convenient for this. Mr. John Sich, a free planter, became the island's initial sheriff and Mr. Thomas Bolton, also a free planter, became its initial Clerk of the Peace. The Company specified:

That a Prison or Place for securing safely all offenders against the Law and Good Governmt to be appointed and made in some convenient place in Fort James; The Soldjers distinct and separate from the Freeplanters and that a carefull Marshall or Prison Keeper be appointed wth such moderate fees as in such cases are usuall.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1685

The Bloody Assizes.



At this point the English were beginning to use “[negreros](#),” ships specifically predesigned for the slave trade, rather than merely shipping off Africans toward the Virginia coast in any old freighter that happened to come to hand.



INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

But [enslavement](#) wasn't just for black people: Judge Jefferies accused Bristol aldermen and justices of kidnapping English people to serve on their plantations in the Caribbean and Virginia., and in Edinburgh, [Scotland](#) at this point, all able-bodied vagrants and all unemployed persons of over the tender age of five years were being consigned to lifetime servitude in manufacturing work.

Two women from Wigtown on the south-west coast of [Scotland](#), Margaret Maclachlan (born in 1620) and Margaret Wilson (born in 1667) refused to accept the authority of the King in religious matters and were fastened to stakes in the Solway Firth and forced to watch the tide come in until they drowned.

Dunnottar Castle was used as a prison for 167 Covenanters, including 45 women, who were crowded into the “Whigs Vault,” a dungeon with a window open to the sea, and left to die.

During this year and the following one a [servile insurrection](#) on Jamaica was being suppressed.



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1690

On the island of Jamaica in the Caribbean, a major [slave](#) conspiracy to create [servile insurrection](#), beginning in Clarendon, was detected and promptly exterminated.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1692

On the island of Barbados, a slave conspiracy to massacre whites was discovered.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1698

October 8, Saturday (Old Style): Fear of [servile insurrection](#), due to the increasing importation of black [slaves](#), prompted the government to offer a cash incentive for the bringing of servants who were white into (South) Carolina.

"An Act for the Encouragement of the Importation of White Servants."

"Whereas, the great number of negroes which of late have been imported into this Collony may endanger the safety thereof if speedy care be not taken and encouragement given for the importation of white servants."

§ 1. £13 are to be given to any ship master for every male white servant (Irish excepted), between sixteen and forty years, whom he shall bring into Ashley river; and £12 for boys between twelve and sixteen years. Every servant must have at least four years to serve, and every boy seven years.

§ 3. Planters are to take servants in proportion of one to every six male Negroes above sixteen years.

§ 5. Servants are to be distributed by lot.

§ 8. This act to continue three years. Cooper, STATUTES, II. 153.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1704

October: [Maryland](#) imposed a “poll tax” duty of 20 shillings each on the import of Negroes to defray the public expense of those of them who proved to be useless for labor, and on the import of [Irish](#) Servants to guard against the possibility that so many of them might accumulate as to be able to mount a [Papist servile insurrection](#).

“An Act imposing Three Pence per Gallon on Rum and Wine, Brandy and Spirits; and Twenty Shillings per Poll for Negroes; for raising a Supply to defray the Public Charge of this Province; and Twenty Shillings per Poll on Irish Servants, to prevent the importing too great a Number of Irish Papists into this Province.” Revived in 1708 and 1712. Bacon, *Laws*, 1704, Chapter XXXIII; 1708, Chapter XVI; 1712, Chapter XXII.

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

SLAVERY

[John Evelyn](#)'s diary entries for this month:

October 1, Sunday (Old Style): ... *The weather exceedingly faire & seasonable, so as the yeare has ben wonderfully plentiful in all the fruits of the Earth, so as seldom a more propitious yeare has ben known, God make us thankfull.*

The seige of Landau yet continuing, its redition is houely expected: Sir G. Rooke & Mediterranean fleete come home safly: The losse on both sides very greate, but the Victory acknowledged on our side: The unhapy D. of Bavaria, retired to Flanders having lost his glorious Country:

October 22, Sunday (Old Style): ... *The Queene [on one side] Lords & Comm: with extraordinary expressions of grace and kindnesse, congratulating their meeting, after the late Successes, & intimations of need of supplys to finish the humbling the French &c: & the Lords & Commons satisfaction of her government, & the like Congratulations of successe in Germany, gave hopes of a perfect and unanimous agreement of this Sessions just now begun:*





SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1712

In a [New-York](#) that at this point had reached a population of 5,840, one of the blacks who had been taught to read and write by the [Huguenot](#) catechism instructor Ellis Neau was charged with involvement in a slave plot. Did this mean that it was demonstrably unwise to teach American [slaves](#) to read and write, even barely enough to be able to receive the gospel of Christ? Defenders of the agenda of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts would be able to point out that although this black had indeed been taught to read and to write up to a certain level as part of their class, in preparation for a baptismal ceremony, in fact after his execution –guess what– he had been discovered to have been quite innocent of any involvement in that slave plot.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

In the year 1712 a considerable number of negroes of the Carmantee and Pappa Nations formed a plot to destroy all the English, *in order to obtain their liberty*; and kept their conspiracy so secret, that there was no suspicion of it till it came to the very execution. However, the plot was by God's Providence happily defeated. The plot was this. The negroes set fire to a house in York city, and Sunday night in April, about the going down of the moon. The fire alarmed the town, who from all parts ran to it; the conspirators planted themselves in several streets and lanes leading to the fire, and shot or stabbed the people as they were running to it. Some of the wounded escaped, and acquainted the Government, and presently by the firing of a great gun from the fort, the inhabitants were called under arms and pretty easily scattered the negroes; they had killed about 8 and wounded 12 more. In their flight some of them shot themselves, others their wives, and then themselves; some absconded a few days, and then killed themselves for fear of being taken; but a great many were taken, and 18 of them suffered death. This wicked conspiracy was at first apprehended to be general among all the negroes, and opened the mouths of many to speak against giving the negroes instruction. Mr. Neau durst hardly appear abroad for some days; his school was blamed as the main occasion of this barbarous plot. On examination, only two of all his school were so much as charged with the plot, and on full trial the guilty negroes were found to be such as never came to Mr. Neau's school; and what is very observable, the persons, whose negroes were found to be most guilty, were such as were the declared opposers of making them Christians. However a great jealousy was now raised, and the common cry very loud against instructing the negroes.

Of course, if it were going to be allowed that some slaves might read and write, then it would be necessary to institute some sort of program to ensure that whatever reading materials became available to them would include **nothing having any problematic ideas**. For instance, it would be exceedingly unwise to allow a slave access to such opinion pieces as the [Declaration of Independence](#) (when events would work their way around to that document getting written), with its rank celebration of the notion of personal “freedom.

AN INFORMED CITIZENRY

In the colony of [New York](#) in this year, it was being made more difficult for a white slavemaster to legally [manumit](#) his black slaves.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT



April 7, Monday (Old Style): In a slave revolt in [New-York](#), buildings had been set afire and 9 of the white men who had come to stop the blazes had been killed. Refer to Kenneth Scott's "The Slave Insurrection in New York in 1712," New York Historical Quarterly, Volume XLV, No. 1, January 1961. White soldiers pursued 23 slaves into a wooded swamp which was near what is now City Hall Park, and at that point 6 committed suicide. The remaining 17 were captured and 15 of them would be burned alive, one would be hung up in chains to starve, and one would be tied face down to a wheel lying on the ground and would –while an assemblage of whites counted cadence– have his bones crushed, blow by blow, by a white man wielding a sledgehammer.

Hey, no more Mr. Nice Guy!

As a result of this disturbance it became the law, that if a solitary negro were found off his owner's land with, in his hand, anything which might function as a weapon, or if 3 were seen in company with one another off their master's property without his authorization even without anything which might function as a weapon, the punishment would be 40 lashes across the back.

SLAVERY

There would be, in [New-York](#), yet another rebellion beginning with arson still to come, in March/April 1741.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

June 7, Saturday (Old Style): In order to cope with its fears of [servile insurrection](#) after "Divers Plots and Insurrections," Pennsylvania enacted a prohibitive tariff on the importation of Negro slaves, Indian slaves, rum, and other objectionable items of import (this tariff would be disallowed by Great Britain in 1713).

"A supplementary Act to an act, entituled, An impost act, laying a duty on Negroes, rum," etc. Carey and Bioren, LAWS, I. 87, 88. Cf. COLONIAL RECORDS (1852), II. 553.

"An act to prevent the Importation of Negroes and Indians into this Province."

"Whereas Divers Plots and Insurrections have frequently happened, not only in the Islands, but on the Main Land of *America*, by Negroes, which have been carried on so far that several of the Inhabitants have been thereby barbarously Murthered, an instance whereof we have lately had in our neighboring Colony of *New York*. And whereas the Importation of Indian Slaves hath given our Neighboring *Indians* in this Province some umbrage of Suspicion and Dis-satisfaction. For Prevention of all which for the future,

"Be it Enacted ..., That from and after the Publication of this Act, upon the Importation of any Negro or Indian, by Land or Water, into this Province, there shall be paid by the Importer, Owner or Possessor thereof, the sum of *Twenty Pounds per head*, for every Negro or Indian so imported or brought in (except Negroes directly brought in from the *West India Islands* before the first Day of the Month called *August* next) unto the proper Officer herein after named, or that shall be appointed according to the Directions of this Act to receive the same," etc. LAWS OF PENNSYLVANIA, COLLECTED, etc. (ed. 1714), page 165; COLONIAL RECORDS (1852), II. 553; Burge, COMMENTARIES, I. 737, note; PENN. ARCHIVES, I. 162.

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

SLAVERY

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: One of the first American protests against the slave-trade came from certain German Friends, in



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1688, at a Weekly Meeting held in Germantown, Pennsylvania. "These are the reasons," wrote "Garret henderich, derick up de graeff, Francis daniell Pastorius, and Abraham up Den graef," "why we are against the traffick of men-body, as followeth: Is there any that would be done or handled at this manner?... Now, tho they are black, we cannot conceive there is more liberty to have them slaves, as it is to have other white ones. There is a saying, that we shall doe to all men like as we will be done ourselves; making no difference of what generation, descent or colour they are. And those who steal or robb men, and those who buy or purchase them, are they not all alike?"² This little leaven helped slowly to work a revolution in the attitude of this great sect toward slavery and the slave-trade. The Yearly Meeting at first postponed the matter, "It having so General a Relation to many other Parts."³ Eventually, however, in 1696, the Yearly Meeting advised "That Friends be careful not to encourage the bringing in of any more Negroes."⁴ This advice was repeated in stronger terms for a quarter-century,⁵ and by that time Sandiford, Benezet, Lay, and Woolman had begun their crusade. In 1754 the Friends took a step farther and made the purchase of slaves a matter of discipline.⁶ Four years later the Yearly Meeting expressed itself clearly as "against every branch of this practice," and declared that if "any professing with us should persist to vindicate it, and be concerned in importing, selling or purchasing slaves, the respective Monthly Meetings to which they belong should manifest their disunion with such persons."⁷ Further, manumission was recommended, and in 1776 made compulsory.⁸ The effect of this attitude of the Friends was early manifested in the legislation of all the colonies where the sect was influential, and particularly in Pennsylvania. One of the first duty acts (1710) laid a restrictive duty of 40s. on slaves, and was eventually disallowed.⁹ In 1712 William Southeby petitioned the Assembly totally to abolish slavery. This the Assembly naturally refused to attempt; but the same year, in response to another petition "signed by many hands," they passed an "Act to prevent the Importation of Negroes and Indians,"¹⁰ – the first enactment of its kind in America. This act was inspired largely by the general fear of insurrection which succeeded the "Negro-plot" of 1712 in New York. It declared: "Whereas, divers Plots and Insurrections have frequently happened, not only in the Islands but on the Main Land of America, by Negroes, which have been carried on so far that several of the inhabitants have been barbarously Murthered, an Instance whereof we have lately had in our Neighboring Colony of New York,"¹¹ etc. It then proceeded to lay a prohibitive duty of £20 on all slaves imported. These acts were quickly disposed of in England. Three duty acts affecting Negroes, including the prohibitory act, were in 1713 disallowed, and it was directed

2. From fac-simile copy, published at Germantown in 1880. Cf. Whittier's poem, "Pennsylvania Hall" (POETICAL WORKS, Riverside ed., III. 62); and Proud, HISTORY OF PENNSYLVANIA (1797), I. 219.

3. From fac-simile copy, published at Germantown in 1880.

4. Bettle, NOTICES OF NEGRO SLAVERY, in PENN. HIST. SOC. MEM. (1864), I. 383.

5. Cf. Bettle, NOTICES OF NEGRO SLAVERY, PASSIM.

6. Janney, HISTORY OF THE FRIENDS, III. 315-7.

7. HISTORY OF THE FRIENDS, III. 317.

8. Bettle, in PENN. HIST. SOC. MEM., I. 395.

9. PENN. COL. REC. (1852), II. 530; Bettle, in PENN. HIST. SOC. MEM., I. 415.

10. LAWS OF PENNSYLVANIA, COLLECTED, etc., 1714, page 165; Bettle, in PENN. HIST. SOC. MEM., I. 387.

11. See preamble of the act.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

that "the Dep^{ty} Gov^r Council and Assembly of Pensilvania, be & they are hereby Strictly Enjoynd & required not to permit the said Laws ... to be from henceforward put in Execution."¹² The Assembly repealed these laws, but in 1715 passed another laying a duty of £5, which was also eventually disallowed.¹³ Other acts, the provisions of which are not clear, were passed in 1720 and 1722,¹⁴ and in 1725-1726 the duty on Negroes was raised to the restrictive figure of £10.¹⁵ This duty, for some reason not apparent, was lowered to £2 in 1729,¹⁶ but restored again in 1761.¹⁷ A struggle occurred over this last measure, the Friends petitioning for it, and the Philadelphia merchants against it, declaring that "We, the subscribers, ever desirous to extend the Trade of this Province, have seen, for some time past, the many inconveniencys the Inhabitants have suffer'd for want of Labourers and artificers, ... have for some time encouraged the importation of Negroes;" they prayed therefore at least for a delay in passing the measure.¹⁸ The law, nevertheless, after much debate and altercation with the governor, finally passed. These repeated acts nearly stopped the trade, and the manumission or sale of Negroes by the Friends decreased the number of slaves in the province. The rising spirit of independence enabled the colony, in 1773, to restore the prohibitive duty of £20 and make it perpetual.¹⁹ After the Revolution unpaid duties on slaves were collected and the slaves registered,²⁰ and in 1780 an "Act for the gradual Abolition of Slavery" was passed.²¹ As there were probably at no time before the war more than 11,000 slaves in Pennsylvania,²² the task thus accomplished was not so formidable as in many other States. As it was, participation in the slave-trade outside the colony was not prohibited until 1788.²³

It seems probable that in the original Swedish settlements along the Delaware slavery was prohibited.²⁴ This measure had, however, little practical effect; for as soon as the Dutch got control the slave-trade was opened, although, as it appears, to no large extent. After the fall of the Dutch Delaware came into English hands. Not until 1775 do we find any legislation on the slave-trade. In that year the colony attempted to prohibit the

12. The Pennsylvanians did not allow their laws to reach England until long after they were passed: PENN. ARCHIVES, I. 161-2; COL. REC., II. 572-3. These acts were disallowed Feb. 20, 1713. Another duty act was passed in 1712, supplementary to the Act of 1710 (COL. REC., II. 553). The contents are unknown.

13. ACTS AND LAWS OF PENNSYLVANIA, 1715, page 270; Chalmers, OPINIONS, II. 118. Before the disallowance was known, the act had been continued by the Act of 1718: Carey and Bioren, LAWS OF PENNSYLVANIA, 1700-1802, I. 118; PENN. COL. REC., III. 38.

14. Carey and Bioren, LAWS, I. 165; PENN. COL. REC., III. 171; Bettie, in PENN. HIST. SOC. MEM., I. 389, note.

15. Carey and Bioren, LAWS, I. 214; Bettie, in PENN. HIST. SOC. MEM., I. 388. Possibly there were two acts this year.

16. LAWS OF PENNSYLVANIA (ed. 1742), page 354, ch. 287. Possibly some change in the currency made this change appear greater than it was.

17. Carey and Bioren, LAWS, I. 371; ACTS OF ASSEMBLY (ed. 1782), page 149; Dallas, LAWS, I. 406, ch. 379. This act was renewed in 1768: Carey and Bioren, LAWS, I. 451; PENN. COL. REC., IX. 472, 637, 641.

18. PENN. COL. REC., VIII. 576.

19. A large petition called for this bill. Much altercation ensued with the governor: Dallas, LAWS, I. 671, ch. 692; PENN. COL. REC., X. 77; Bettie, in PENN. HIST. SOC. MEM., I. 388-9.

20. Dallas, LAWS, I. 782, ch. 810.

21. LAWS, I. 838, ch. 881.

22. There exist but few estimates of the number of slaves in this colony: —

In 1721, 2,500-5,000. DOC. REL. COL. HIST. NEW YORK, V. 604.

In 1754, 11,000. Bancroft, HIST. OF UNITED STATES (1883), II. 391.

In 1760, very few. Burnaby, TRAVELS THROUGH N. AMER. (2d ed.), page 81.

In 1775, 2,000. PENN. ARCHIVES, IV 597.

23. Dallas, LAWS, II. 586.

24. Cf. ARGONAUTICA GUSTAVIANA, pages 21-3; DEL. HIST. SOC. PAPERS, III. 10; HAZARD'S REGISTER, IV. 221, §§ 23, 24; HAZARD'S ANNALS, page 372; Armstrong, RECORD OF UPLAND COURT, pages 29-30, and notes.



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

importation of slaves, but the governor vetoed the bill.²⁵
Finally, in 1776 by the Constitution, and in 1787 by law,
importation and exportation were both prohibited.²⁶

25. Force, AMERICAN ARCHIVES, 4th Ser., II. 128-9.

26. AMERICAN ARCHIVES, 5th Ser., I. 1178; LAWS OF DELAWARE, 1797 (Newcastle ed.), page 884, ch. 145 b.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1717

December 11, day (Old Style): Because “the great importation of negroes to this Province [South Carolina], in proportion to the white inhabitants of the same” was creating a prospect of [servile insurrection](#) in which “the future safety of this Province will be greatly endangered,” for the following four years the colony would be exacting an additional prohibitive duty of £40 per capita –over and above all previous imposts– on any additional “negro slaves of any age or condition whatsoever, imported or otherwise brought into this Province, from any part of the world.”

“A further additional Act to an Act entitled An Act for the better ordering and governing of Negroes and all other Slaves; and to an additional Act to an Act entitled An Act for the better ordering and governing of Negroes and all other Slaves.”

§ 3. “And *whereas*, the great importation of negroes to this Province, in proportion to the white inhabitants of the same, whereby the future safety of this Province will be greatly endangered; for the prevention whereof,

“*Be it enacted* by the authority aforesaid, That all negro slaves of any age or condition whatsoever, imported or otherwise brought into this Province, from any part of the world, shall pay such additional duties as is hereafter named, that is to say: – that every merchant or other person whatsoever, who shall, eighteen months after the ratification of this Act, import any negro slave as aforesaid, shall, for every such slave, pay unto the public receiver for the time being, at the time of each importation, over and above all the duties already charged on negroes, by any law in force in this Province, the additional sum of forty pounds current money of this Province,” etc.

§ 4. This section on duties to be in force for four years after ratification, and thence to the end of the next session of the General Assembly. Cooper, *STATUTES*, VII. 368.

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE
SLAVERY

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: South Carolina had the largest and most widely developed slave-trade of any of the continental colonies. This was owing to the character of her settlers, her nearness to the West Indian slave marts, and the early development of certain staple crops, such as rice, which were adapted to slave labor.²⁷ Moreover, this colony suffered much less interference from the home government than many other colonies; thus it is possible here to trace the untrammelled development of slave-trade restrictions in a typical planting community.

As early as 1698 the slave-trade to South Carolina had reached such proportions that it was thought that “the great number of negroes which of late have been imported into this Collony may endanger the safety thereof.” The immigration of white servants was therefore encouraged by a special law.²⁸ Increase of immigration reduced this disproportion, but Negroes continued to be imported in such numbers as to afford considerable revenue from a moderate duty on them. About the time when the Assiento

27. Cf. Hewatt, *HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF S. CAROLINA AND GEORGIA* (1779), I. 120 ff.; reprinted in *S.C. HIST. COLL.* (1836), I. 108 ff.

28. Cooper, *STATUTES AT LARGE OF S. CAROLINA*, II. 153.



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

was signed, the slave-trade so increased that, scarcely a year after the consummation of that momentous agreement, two heavy duty acts were passed, because "the number of Negroes do extremely increase in this Province, and through the afflicting providence of God, the white persons do not proportionately multiply, by reason whereof, the safety of the said Province is greatly endangered."²⁹ The trade, however, by reason of the encouragement abroad and of increased business activity in exporting naval stores at home, suffered scarcely any check, although repeated acts, reciting the danger incident to a "great importation of Negroes," were passed, laying high duties.³⁰ Finally, in 1717, an additional duty of £40,³¹ although due in depreciated currency, succeeded so nearly in stopping the trade that, two years later, all existing duties were repealed and one of £10 substituted.³² This continued during the time of resistance to the proprietary government, but by 1734 the importation had again reached large proportions. "We must therefore beg leave," the colonists write in that year, "to inform your Majesty, that, amidst our other perilous circumstances, we are subject to many intestine dangers from the great number of negroes that are now among us, who amount at least to twenty-two thousand persons, and are three to one of all your Majesty's white subjects in this province. Insurrections against us have been often attempted."³³ In 1740 an insurrection under a slave, Cato, at Stono, caused such widespread alarm that a prohibitory duty of £100 was immediately laid.³⁴ Importation was again checked; but in 1751 the colony sought to devise a plan whereby the slightly restricted immigration of Negroes should provide a fund to encourage the importation of white servants, "to prevent the mischiefs that may be attended by the great importation of negroes into this Province."³⁵ Many white servants were thus encouraged to settle in the colony; but so much larger was the influx of black slaves that the colony, in 1760, totally prohibited the slave-trade. This act was promptly disallowed by the Privy Council and the governor reprimanded;³⁶ but the colony declared that "an importation of negroes, equal in number to what have been imported of late years, may prove of the most dangerous consequence in many respects to this Province, and the best way to obviate such danger will be by imposing such an additional duty upon them as may totally prevent the evils."³⁷ A prohibitive duty of £100 was accordingly imposed in 1764.³⁸ This duty probably continued until the Revolution.

29. The text of the first act is not extant: cf. Cooper, STATUTES, III. 56. For the second, see Cooper, VII. 365, 367.

30. Cf. Grimké, PUBLIC LAWS OF S. CAROLINA, page xvi, No. 362; Cooper, STATUTES, II. 649. Cf. also GOVERNOR JOHNSON TO THE BOARD OF TRADE, Jan. 12, 1719-20; reprinted in Rivers, EARLY HISTORY OF S. CAROLINA (1874), App., xii.

31. Cooper, STATUTES, VII. 368.

32. Cooper, STATUTES, III. 56.

33. From a memorial signed by the governor, President of the Council, and Speaker of the House, dated April 9, 1734, printed in Hewatt, HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF S. CAROLINA AND GEORGIA (1779), II. 39; reprinted in S.C. Hist. Coll. (1836), I. 305-6. Cf. N.C. COL. REC., II. 421.

34. Cooper, STATUTES, III. 556; Grimké, PUBLIC LAWS, page xxxi, No. 694. Cf. Ramsay, HISTORY OF S. CAROLINA, I. 110.

35. Cooper, STATUTES, III. 739.

36. The text of this law has not been found. Cf. Burge, COMMENTARIES ON COLONIAL AND FOREIGN LAWS, I. 737, note; Stevens, HISTORY OF GEORGIA, I. 286. See instructions of the governor of New Hampshire, June 30, 1761, in Gordon, HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, I. letter 2.

37. Cooper, STATUTES, IV. 187.

38. This duty avoided the letter of the English instructions by making the duty payable by the first purchasers, and not by the importers. Cf. Cooper, STATUTES, IV. 187.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1720

May 6: In South Carolina a [slave](#) revolt resulted in the deaths of two whites, Benjamin Cattle and a woman, and also a black youth.

Forces were immediately raised, and sent after them, twenty-three of whom were taken, six convicted, three executed, and three escaped.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1722

October: Near the mouth of the Rappahannock River in Virginia, approximately 200 [slaves](#) of color gathered with an intent to attack a church and kill the white people inside. When it was discovered, this group dispersed.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1723

April 13, day (Old Style): In the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Governor Dummer broadcast a general warning against villainous and desperate Negroes or other dissolute people:

Whereas within some short time past, many fires have broke out within the town of Boston, and divers buildings have thereby been consumed: which fires have been designedly and industriously kindled by some villainous and desperate Negroes, or other dissolute people, as appears by the confession of some of them (who have been examined by authority) and many concurring circumstances; and it being vehemently suspected that they *have entered into a combination to burn and destroy the town*, I have therefore thought fit, with the advice of his Majesty's Council, to issue forth this Proclamation....

SERVILE INSURRECTION

April 18, day (Old Style): According to the diary of the Reverend Samuel Dexter, the Reverend Joseph Sewall preached about "the late fires yt have broke out in [Boston](#), supposed to be purposely set by ye Negroes."

SERVILE INSURRECTION

April 19, day (Old Style): The selectmen of [Boston](#) reported to the town on the subject of the recent spate of structure fires, purportedly set by blacks, making recommendations such as the following:

That if more than Two Indians, Negro or Molatto Servants or Slaves be found in the Streets or Highways in or about the Town, idling or lurking together unless in the service of their Master or Employer, every one so found shall be punished at the House of Correction.

A military force would be detailed back up the local night watchmen. At the breaking out of a fire, a squad of this militia would go under arms to the scene along with the firemen, in order to ensure that there were no race complications.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

Eventually the recommendations made by the Boston selectmen would result in a Negro Act, in which would appear the following:

That no Indian, negro or mullatto, upon the breaking out of fire and the continuance thereof during the night season, shall depart from his or her master's house, nor be found in the streets at or near the place where the fire is, upon pain of being forthwith seized and sent to the common gaol, and afterwards whipt, three days following before dismist....



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1724

April 8, Wednesday (Old Style): The Boston Weekly Journal issued a reminder of the continuous peril to white Americans, of servile insurrection among their slaves of color. Eternal race vigilance is the price of race liberty!

Every reasonable man ought to remember their *first* villanous attempt at New York, and how many good innocent people were murdered by them, and had it not been for the garrison there, that city would have been reduced to ashes, and the greatest part of the inhabitants murdered.



"I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return."

— W.H. Auden, September 1, 1939



November: The New England Courant issued a reminder of the continuous peril to white Americans, of servile insurrection among their slaves of color. Eternal race vigilance is the price of race liberty!

It is well known what loss the town of Boston sustained by fire not long since, *when almost every night* for a considerable time together, some building or other and sometimes several in the same night were either burned to the ground or some attempts made to do it. It is likewise well known that those villanies were carried on by Negro servants, the like whereof we never felt before from unruly servants, nor ever heard of the like happening in any place attended with the like circumstances.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1725

Beginning of the 1st Maroon War on the island of Jamaica:

1640-1713	seven slave revolts in the islands of the British West Indies
1655	With Jamaica in transition between Spanish control and English control, some 1,500 slaves escaped into the mountains to form maroon communities.
1656	Juan de Bolas led many of the escaped slaves in the maroon communities of the mountains of Jamaica down to the plains and the coast with a deal in which the English granted pardon and freedom. Many maroons, however, would elect to remain in the mountains.
1725-1740	1st Maroon War on Jamaica
March 1, 1738-1739	The 1st Maroon War on Jamaica ended in a treaty guaranteeing freedom for the maroons, the deal being that henceforward they would capture and turn in for a reward any new slave or bond-laborer escapees.
1760	slave uprising on Jamaica
1776	slave uprising on Jamaica
1784	slave uprising on Jamaica
1795-1796	2d Maroon War on Jamaica
1823	slave uprising on Jamaica
1824	slave uprising on Jamaica
1831	slave uprising on Jamaica



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1728

The population of Savannah, Georgia was 3,000 whites and 2,700 blacks. A group of persons of color assembled with intent to destroy all the whites. After being twice fired upon, they dispersed.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: We find in the planting colonies all degrees of advocacy of the trade, from the passiveness of Maryland to the clamor of Georgia. Opposition to the trade did not appear in Georgia, was based almost solely on political fear of insurrection in Carolina, and sprang largely from the same motive in Virginia, mingled with some moral repugnance. As a whole, it may be said that whatever opposition to the slave-trade there was in the planting colonies was based principally on the political fear of insurrection.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1729

January: When three [slaves](#) in Antigua conspired to destroy the English, their plot was discovered two or three days before the day on which they were planning to launch their assault, and in retaliation the English burned two of the three alive. The account reads:

'Twas admirable to see how long they stood before they died, the great wood not readily burning, and their cry was water, water!


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1730

 In Virginia, a [slave](#) conspiracy was discovered in Norfolk and Princess Anne counties.

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August: A [servile insurrection](#) occurred in Williamsburgh, Virginia when a rumor spread among the [slaves](#) that upon the arrival of a Colonel Spotswood, all baptized persons were to be manumitted. This was said to be a special dictate of His Majesty the King of England. The rumor caused great celebration and irregularity among the black population. Five counties called up their white militias to follow the bands of celebrating slaves, with orders to execute any who could not be induced to return to their stations.

Some [slaves](#) in South Carolina managed to arm themselves after a fashion in a plot to destroy all whites. Their revolt was scheduled on a Sabbath day.

A [slave](#) who had plundered and burned a house in Malden, Massachusetts explained that he was anguished because his master had sold him to a man in Salem whom he did not like.

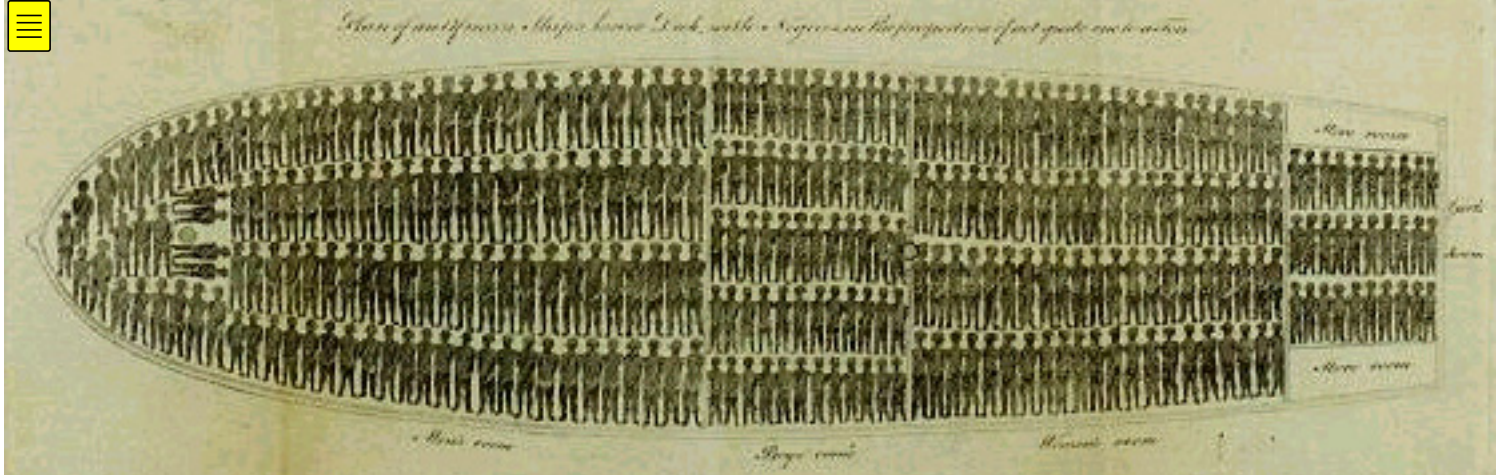
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1731

In [Rhode Island](#) harbors alone, during this year alone, it has been estimated by Alexander Boyd Hawes, some 4 [negreros](#) were being fitted out for the [international slave trade](#). If an average cargo of [slaves](#) was 109 –as we have estimated on the basis of a number of known cargos– then a total of something like 436 souls would have been being transported over the dreadful [Middle Passage](#) during this year in Rhode Island bottoms alone.



Captain George Scott of [Rhode Island](#) was returning from Guinea with a cargo of [slaves](#) when they rose up killing three of the crewmembers. Soon all the white crewmembers would die, except the captain and the ship's boy.

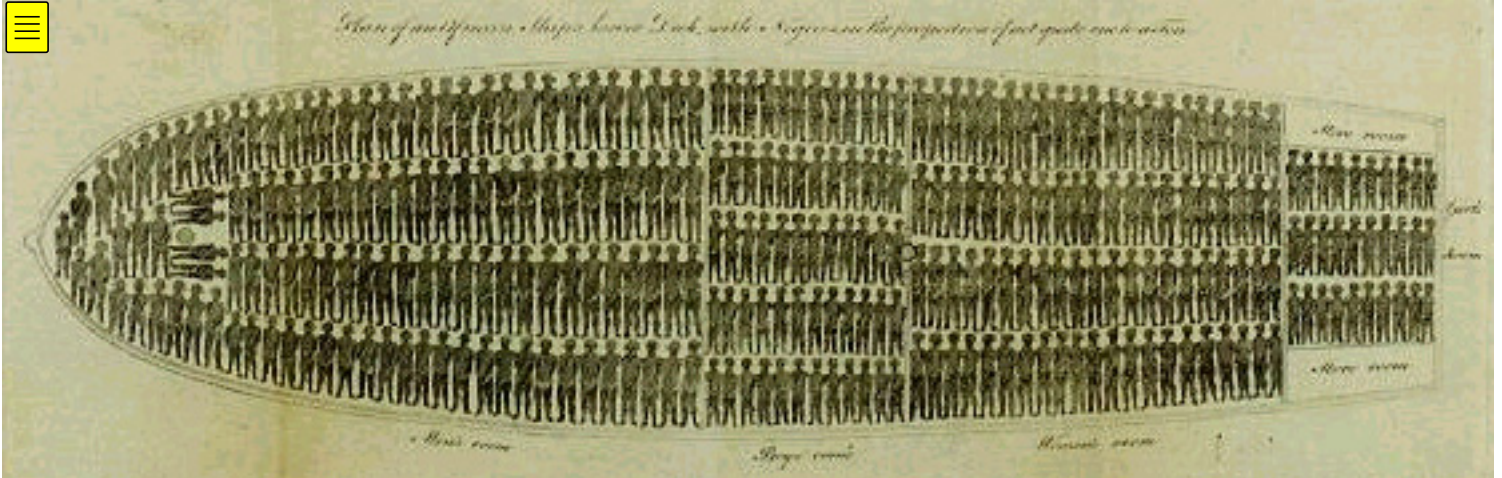
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April 29, Thursday (Old Style): According to a report in a Boston gazette, in the previous year Captain George Scott of [Newport, Rhode Island](#) had been 100 leagues from the coast of Africa on his way home with yet another cargo of human flesh packed into his sloop *Little George* — when allofasudden there had been an uprising.



MIDDLE PASSAGE

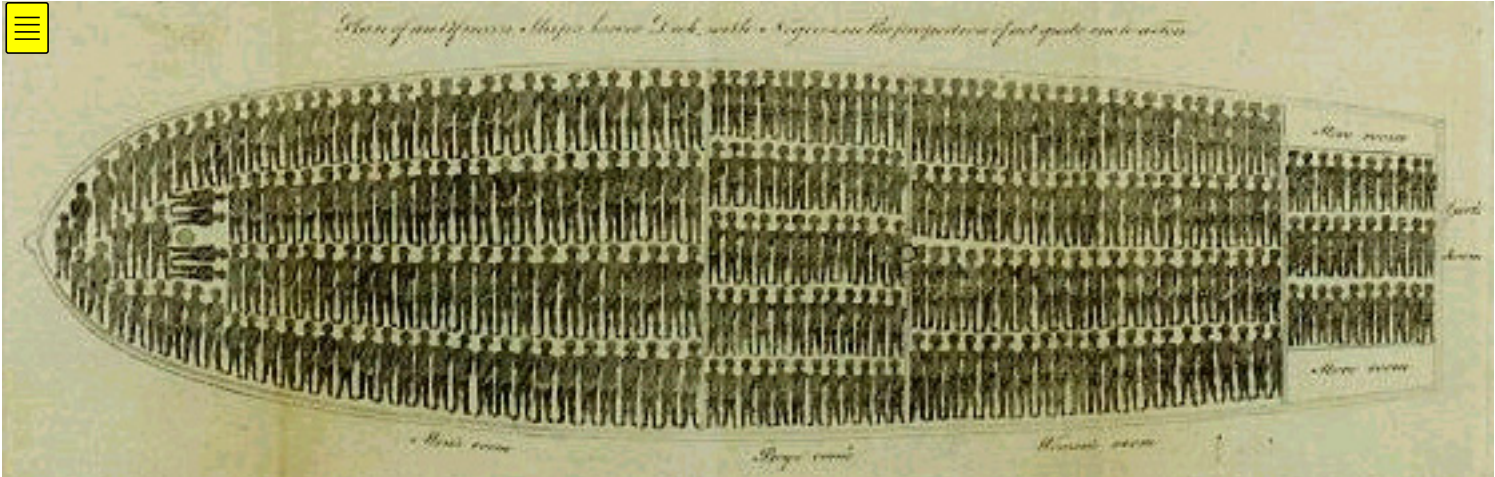
“We hear from [Rhode Island](#) that Captain George Scott of that place, who sometime since went from thence to Guinea, and was returning with a cargo of Negroes, they rose upon the said commander and company, and barbarously murdered three of his men, the said captain and the rest of his company made their escape, tho tis said they are all since dead except the captain and a boy; The Negroes we are informed were afterwards taken and made slaves by those other nation.”

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(The slaver captain, undaunted by this setback, would sail out of [Newport](#) for the coast of Africa to collect more human raw material, each year for the following five years.)

1732

In [Rhode Island](#) harbors alone, during this year alone, it has been estimated by Alexander Boyd Hawes, some 5 [negreros](#) were being fitted out for the [international slave trade](#). If an average cargo of [slaves](#) was 109 –as we have estimated on the basis of a number of known cargos– then a total of something like 545 souls would have been being transported over the dreadful [Middle Passage](#) during this year in Rhode Island bottoms alone.



Aboard the schooner of Captain John Major of Portsmouth, New Hampshire [slaves](#) murdered everyone and seized the vessel and its cargo.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



"I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return."
— [W.H. Auden](#), [September 1, 1939](#)





SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1733

In the Caribbean, France sold St. Croix to the Danish West India & Guinea Company. There was a [servile insurrection](#) on St. John in the Danish West Indies.



SLAVE REVOLT

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1734

New slaves being disembarked at the long barracks in [Perth Amboy, New Jersey](#) unsuccessfully attempted a [servile insurrection](#), and were quickly put down.

Spring: A number of black citizens of Burlington, Pennsylvania had been scheming that when it became warm enough for them to lie in the woods, they would select a midnight on which to kill every master and his sons (sparing females), kill draught horses, set houses and barns afire, and abscond with all saddle horses on a general black flight toward safety with the native Americans of the back forest allied with the French (these people were described in a contemporary account as “intestine and inhuman enemies, who in some places have been too much indulged”).

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December: Jamaica, under martial law, had 2,000 soldiers pursuing “rebellious negroes.”

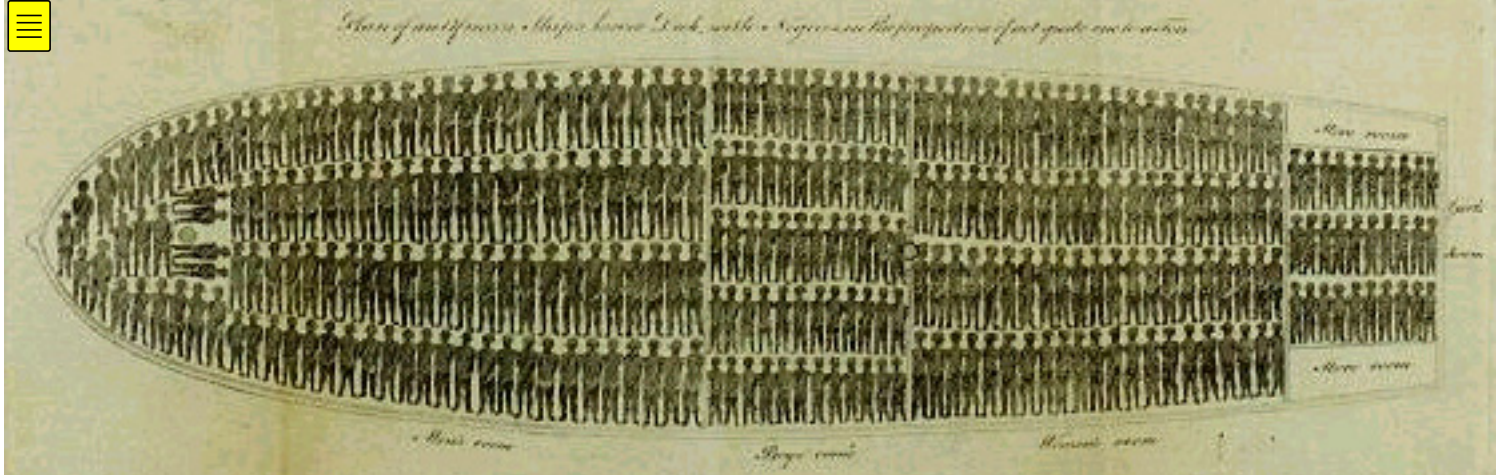
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SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1735

In [Rhode Island](#) harbors alone, during this year alone, it has been estimated by Alexander Boyd Hawes, some 9 [negreros](#) were being fitted out for the [international slave trade](#). If an average cargo of [slaves](#) was 109—as we have estimated on the basis of a number of known cargos—then a total of something like 981 souls would have been being transported over the dreadful [Middle Passage](#) during this year in Rhode Island bottoms alone.



In approximately this year a person named [Cudgoe](#) was born. We don't at this point know whether he was born in [Rhode Island](#) or in Africa, but we know what his life trajectory would be — he would be used all his life by American white men as a useful object of labor, in 1768 he would be passed from hand to hand as a piece of property, he would almost be present for the signing of our [Declaration of Independence](#) in 1776 (almost but not quite), and then in extreme old age in 1806 he would finally again come to the white man's attention (but, only as a needy neglected object of charity).

Also during this year the slave cargo aboard the *Dolphin*, a London vessel on the coast of Africa, attempted unsuccessfully to take control of their lives. Not being able to proceed any further than seizing control of the powder room, they blew up themselves, the crew, and the vessel.

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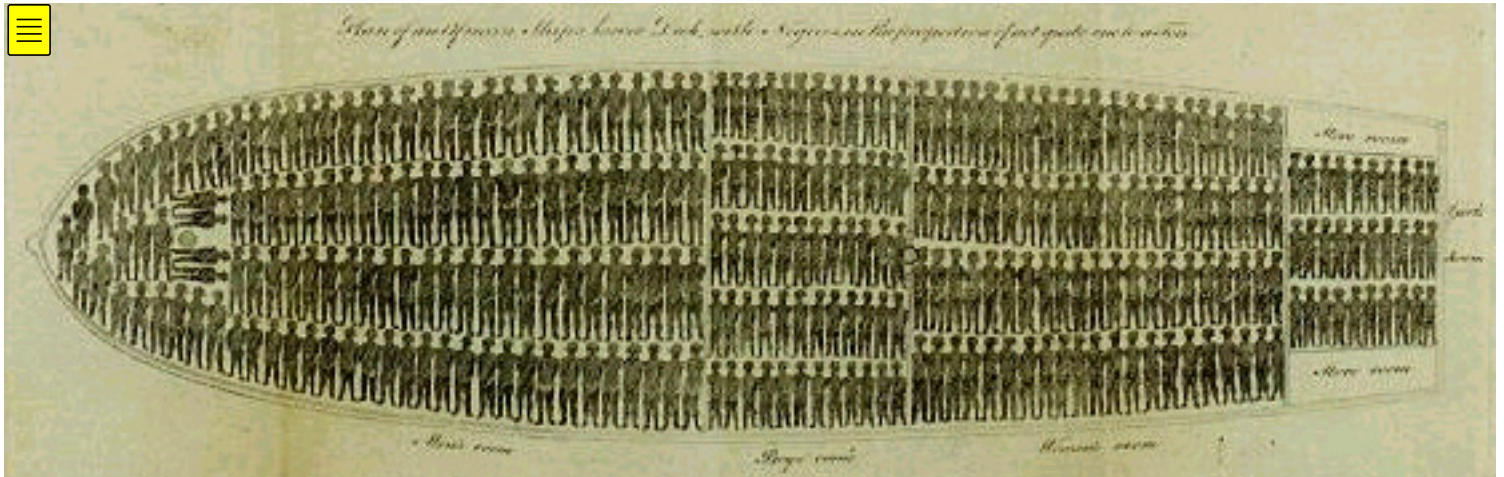
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1739

According to Herman Moll's MODERN HISTORY: OR THE PRESENT STATE OF ALL NATIONS, published at Dublin, [Rhode Island](#) was noticeably religious.

MOLL'S MODERN HISTORY

In [Rhode Island](#) harbors alone, during this year alone, it has been estimated by Alexander Boyd Hawes, some 10 [negros](#) were being fitted out for the [international slave trade](#). If an average cargo was 109—as we have estimated on the basis of a number of known cargos—then a total of something like 1,090 souls would have been being transported over the dread [Middle Passage](#) during this year in Rhode Island bottoms alone.



On about one [Middle Passage](#) voyage out of ten, or more, the cargo would make some gesture toward saving themselves.

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In a very few of these cases, as happened with the *La Amistad* in West Indies waters, [slaves](#) might manage to take over a ship, and Herman Melville's *BENITO CERENO* is in fact based on a true story; the usual outcome, however, was that they would simply be killed, or would be captured and then put to death by torture.

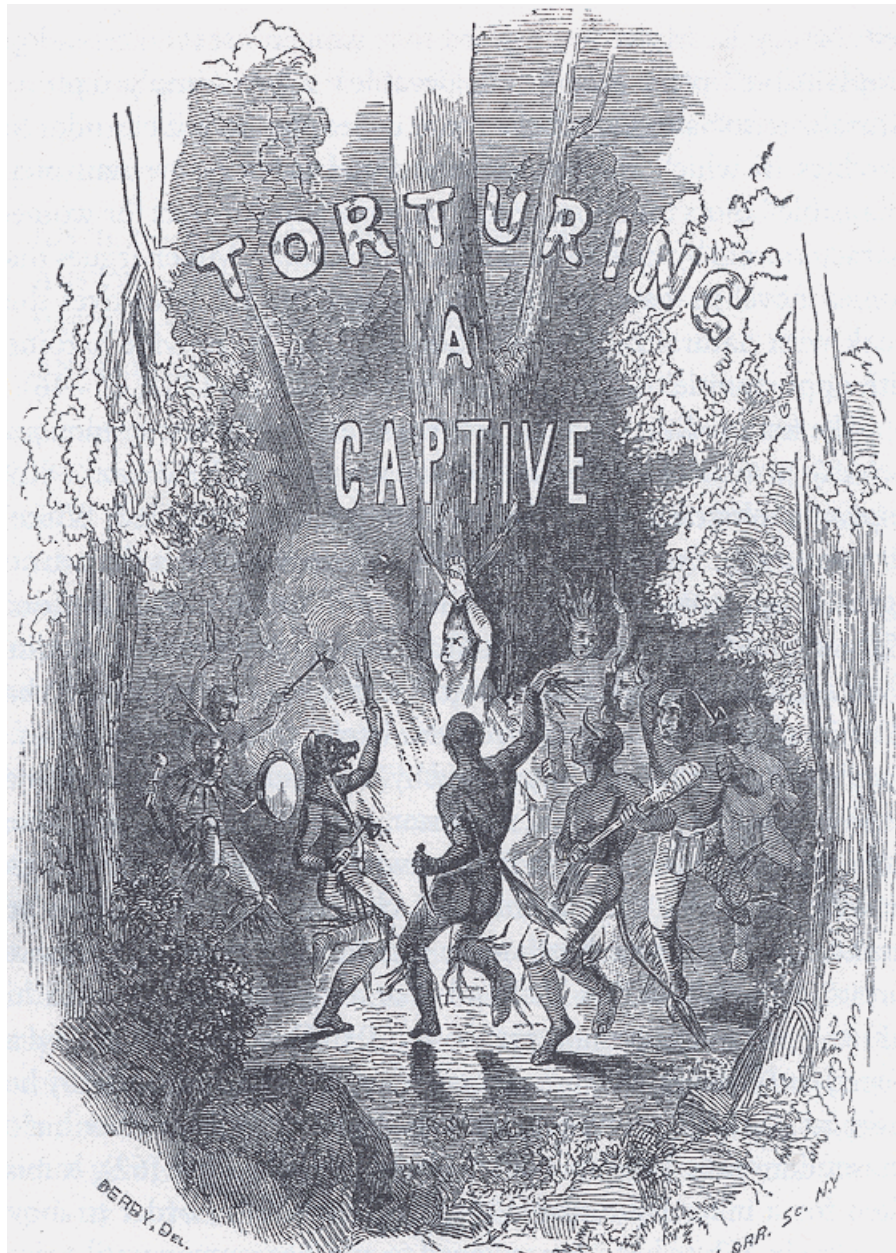
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March 1: The 1st Maroon War on Jamaica ended in a treaty guaranteeing freedom for the maroons, the deal being that henceforward they would capture and turn in for a reward any new slave or bond-laborer escapees:

1640-1713	seven slave revolts in the islands of the British West Indies
1655	With Jamaica in transition between Spanish control and English control, some 1,500 slaves escaped into the mountains to form maroon communities.
1656	Juan de Bolas led many of the escaped slaves in the maroon communities of the mountains of Jamaica down to the plains and the coast with a deal in which the English granted pardon and freedom. Many maroons, however, would elect to remain in the mountains.
1668	“Lobby’s rebellion” on Jamaica — several hundred black slaves escaped to the mountains.
1725-1740	1st Maroon War on Jamaica
March 1, 1738-1739	The 1st Maroon War on Jamaica ended in a treaty guaranteeing freedom for the maroons, the deal being that henceforward they would capture and turn in for a reward any new slave or bond-laborer escapees.
1760	slave uprising on Jamaica
1776	slave uprising on Jamaica
1784	slave uprising on Jamaica
1795-1796	2d Maroon War on Jamaica
1823	slave uprising on Jamaica
1824	slave uprising on Jamaica
1831	slave uprising on Jamaica



September: In South Carolina, three [servile insurrections](#) occurred during this year — one in St. Paul’s Parish, one in St. Johns, and one in Charleston. An insurrection led by the slave Cato during a night in September resulted in the deaths of 25 whites and the burnings of 6 houses. The total white death count for this year would rise to a total of 51. The pursuers of Cato’s insurrectionaries initially killed 14 of them, and then a couple of days later killed another 20. Of the 40 they captured alive, they shot some, they hanged some, and some they gibbeted alive (with this gibbeting being referred to by Governor Gibbs as “more exemplary”). –Exemplary the gibbeting may have been, but in the following year there would be another such insurrection in which 40,000 slaves would take part, which would kill another 20 of the white people.

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: We find in the planting colonies all degrees of advocacy of the trade, from the passiveness of Maryland to the clamor of Georgia. Opposition to the trade did not appear in Georgia, was based almost solely on political fear



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of insurrection in Carolina, and sprang largely from the same motive in Virginia, mingled with some moral repugnance. As a whole, it may be said that whatever opposition to the slave-trade there was in the planting colonies was based principally on the political fear of insurrection.



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1740

Following the three [servile insurrections](#) that had occurred in South Carolina during the previous year, there was another such event in which some 40,000 [slaves](#) would take part, which would kill another 20 of the white people.

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: We find in the planting colonies all degrees of advocacy of the trade, from the passiveness of Maryland to the clamor of Georgia. Opposition to the trade did not appear in Georgia, was based almost solely on political fear of insurrection in Carolina, and sprang largely from the same motive in Virginia, mingled with some moral repugnance. As a whole, it may be said that whatever opposition to the slave-trade there was in the planting colonies was based principally on the political fear of insurrection.



"I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return."

— [W.H. Auden](#), [September 1, 1939](#)





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SLAVE REVOLT

1741

February 28, Saturday (1740, Old Style): The Manhattan [tobacco](#) shop of Robert Hogg was burglarized. The money would later be found at Hughson's Alehouse and rumors would spread of a [servile insurrection](#) — the “Alehouse Plot.” By the time calm would be restored to [New-York](#), 4 whites and 25 blacks would have been executed, executed in inventively horrible ways.



March/April: In [New-York](#), a series of suspicious fires and reports of slave conspiracy led to a general hysteria³⁹ similar to the hysteria that had developed in Spring 1712.

The series of “suspicious” fires began with the destruction of Fort George, the Governor's residence. This set off a panic among the white residents, that the [enslaved](#) community (numbering over 2,000 out of the city's population of 11,000) was intending in [servile insurrection](#) to set fire to the city, in order to kill whites as they attempted to extinguish the flames.⁴⁰

The resulting Salem-like (or McCarthyesque) show trials, held throughout that spring and summer, would find over 100 [slaves](#) guilty of arson and/or conspiracy to commit murder. About 70 would be deported, 18 [hanged](#), and 13 burned at the stake.



Commenting on the Scorsese movie “Gangs of New York”:
“In my own research of New York history, through first-person accounts and newspaper reports, I have found that our past was often at least as violent and squalid, if not more so, than the movie depicts.”
— Kevin Baker



39. Read all about it in Jill Lepore's new *LIBERTY, SLAVERY, AND CONSPIRACY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MANHATTAN* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005). —This just in: anything written by Jill Lepore is worth your undivided attention. Also relevant: Thomas J. Davis's *A RUMOR OF REVOLT* (Amherst MA: U of Massachusetts P, 1985) and Daniel Horsmanden's *THE NEW YORK CONSPIRACY* (Boston MA: Beacon Press, 1971).

40. Clearly, there's a terminology problem here. In an effort to resolve this terminology issue, at the Republican National Convention in [New York](#) during August 2004 —at which the [Republican Party](#) would for four days make an effort to strip from its face its mask of hostility to the plight of the downtrodden and reveal its true countenance of benevolent conservatism and concern—these people would be sensitively referred to by a Hoosier Republican running for the US Senate as “involuntary immigrants.”

So, perhaps, this is a good point at which to insert a story about involuntary immigrants that has been passed on to us by Ram Varmha, a retired IBM engineer whose father had briefly served as Maharaja after the independence of Cochin. He relates the story as narrated to him by his paternal grandmother who lived in Thripoonithura, Cochin: “When my grandmother (born 1882) was a young girl she would go with the elder ladies of the family to the Pazhayannur Devi Temple in Fort Cochin, next to the Cochin Lanthia Palace built by the Dutch (Landers = Lanthia), which was an early establishment of the Cochin royal family before the administration moved to Thripoonithura. My grandmother often told us that in the basement of the Lanthia Palace, in a confined area, a family of Africans had been kept locked up, as in a zoo! By my Grandmother's time all the Africans had died. But, some of the elder ladies had narrated the story to her of ‘Kappiries’ (Africans) kept in captivity there. It seems visitors would give them fruits and bananas. They were well cared for but always kept in confinement. My grandmother did not know all the details but according to her, ‘many’ years earlier, a ship having broken its mast drifted into the old Cochin harbor. When the locals climbed aboard, they found a crewless ship, but in the hold there were some chained ‘Kappiries’ still alive; others having perished. The locals did not know what to do with them. Not understanding their language and finding the Africans in chains, the locals thought that these were dangerous to set free. So they herded the poor Africans into the basement of the Cochin Fort, and held them in captivity, for many, many years! I have no idea when the initial incident happened, but I presume it took place in the late 1700s or early 1800s. This points to the possibility that it was, in fact, a slave ship carrying human cargo from East Africa to either the USA or the West Indies. An amazing and rather bizarre story. Incidentally, this is not an ‘old woman's tale’! Its quite reliable. My grandmother would identify some of the older ladies who had actually seen the surviving Kappiries.”



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Per Daniel Horsmanden's THE [NEW-YORK](#) CONSPIRACY, OR THE HISTORY OF THE NEGRO PLOT: WITH THE JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THE CONSPIRATORS AT NEW-YORK IN THE YEARS 1741-2: TOGETHER WITH SEVERAL INTERESTING TABLES CONTAINING THE NAMES OF THE WHITE AND BLACK PERSONS ARRESTED ON ACCOUNT OF THE CONSPIRACY, THE TIMES OF THEIR TRIALS, THEIR SENTENCES, THEIR EXECUTIONS BY BURNING AND HANGING, NAMES OF THOSE TRANSPORTED, AND THOSE DISCHARGED: WITH A VARIETY OF OTHER USEFUL AND HIGHLY INTERESTING MATTER (1741/1742), and A JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS IN THE DETECTION OF THE CONSPIRACY FORMED BY SOME WHITE PEOPLE, IN CONJUNCTION WITH NEGRO AND OTHER SLAVES, FOR BURNING THE CITY OF NEW-YORK IN AMERICA AND MURDERING THE INHABITANTS (1744):

The parties accused of the conspiracy were numerous, and business by degrees multiplied so fast upon the grand jury, which bore the burthen of this inquiry, that there would have been an immediate necessity for others to have lent a helping hand in taking examinations from the beginning, if the judges had not found it expedient to examine the persons accused, upon their first taking into custody, whereby it seemed most likely the truth would bolt out, before they had time to cool, or opportunity of discoursing in the jail with their confederates, who were before committed.

The examinations thus taken by the judges, were soon after laid before the grand jury, who interrogated the parties therefrom in such manner, as generally produced from them the substance of the same matter, and often something more, by which means there accrued no small advantage; for though were the last examination brought to light new discover, yet it will be seldom found, there is any thing in such further examinations contradictory to the former, but generally a confirmation of them; and in such case, the setting forth the same at large, may not be thought a useless tautology; not that this will happen often, and where it does, it will be chiefly found in the examinations and confessions of negroes, who, in ordinary cases, are seldom found to hold twice in the same story; which, for its rarity therefore, if it carried not with it the additional weight of the greater appearance of truth, may make this particular the more excusable; and further, this is a diary of the proceedings, that is to be exhibited, therefore, in conformity to that plan, nothing should be omitted, which may be of use. All proper precautions were taken by the judges, that the criminals should be kept separate; and they were so, as much as the scanty room in the jail would admit of; and new apartments were fitted up for their reception: but more particular care was taken, that such negroes as had made confession and discovery, and were to be made use of as witnesses, should be kept apart from the rest, and as much from each other, as the accommodations would allow of, in order to prevent their caballing from each other first, as well upon the trials, as otherwise, and then generally confronted with the persons they accused, who were usually sent for and taken into custody upon such examinations, if they were to be met with; which was the means of bringing many others to a confession, as well as were newly taken up, as those who had long before been committed, perhaps upon slighter grounds, and had insisted upon their innocence; for they had generally the cunning not to own their guilt, till they knew their accusers. But notwithstanding this was the ordinary method taken, both by the judges and grand jury, to send for the parties as soon as impeached, (which however might sometimes through hurry be omitted) yet several who happened then to be out of the



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way, were afterwards forgot, and slipped through our fingers, from the multiplicity of business in hand, as will hereafter appear; which therefore is particularly recommended to the notice of their owners.

The trouble of examining criminals in general, may be easily guessed at; but the fatigue in that of negroes, is not to be conceived, but by those that have undergone the drudgery. The difficulty of bringing and holding them to the truth, if by chance it starts through them, is not to be surmounted, but by the closest attention; many of them have a great deal of craft; their unintelligible jargon stands them in great stead, to conceal their meaning; so that an examiner must expect to encounter with much perplexity, grope through a maze of obscurity, be obliged to lay hold of broken hints, lay them carefully together, and thoroughly weigh and compare them with each other, before he can be able to see the light, or fix those creatures to any certain determinate meaning.

March 18, Tuesday (1740, Old Style): The 1640 Dutch church on Manhattan Island was destroyed by rebellious [slaves](#).

NEW-YORK

About one o'clock this day a fire broke out of the roof of his majesty's house at Fort George, within this city, near the chapel; when the alarm of fire was first given, it was observed from the town, that the middle of the roof was in a great smoke, but not a spark of fire appeared on the outside for a considerable time.... Upon the chapel bell's ringing, great numbers of people, gentlemen and others, came to the assistance of the lieutenant governor and his family; and ... most of the household goods, etc. were removed and saved.... But the fire got hold of the roof ... and an alarm being given that there was gun powder in the fort, whether through fear and an apprehension that there was, or whether the hint was given by some of the conspirators themselves, with artful design to intimidate the people, and frighten them from giving further assistance, we cannot say; though the lieutenant governor declared to every body that there was none there.... Such was the violence of the wind, and the flames spread so fast, that in about an hour and a quarter's time the house was burnt down to the ground....

April 21, Tuesday (Old Style): At [New-York](#), the great [servile insurrection](#) conspiracy. Of those captured, 13 black slaves would be burned at the stake, 18 would be [hanged](#), and 70 would be sold to the islands of the Caribbean.⁴¹

At a Supreme Court of judicature held for the province of New York, at the city-hall of the city of New York, on Tuesday, April 21, 1741-Present, Frederick Philipse, esq. Second justice; Daniel Horsmanden, esq. third justice.

The grand jury were called. The following persons appeared, and were sworn-viz.:

Mr. Robert Watts, merchant, foreman; Messrs. Jeremiah Latouche, Joseph Read, Anthony Rutgers, John M'Evers, John Cruger, jun. John Merritt, Adoniah Schuyler, Isaac De Peyster, Abraham Keteltass, David Provoost, Rene Hett, Henry Beekman, jun. David

41. Supreme Court of Judicature of New-York, "New York Conspiracy," Journal of the Proceedings Against the Conspirators, at New York in 1741.



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Van Horne, George Spencer, Thomas Duncan, Winant Van Zant, merchants. Mr. Justice Philipse gave the charge to the grand jury, as followeth:

Gentlemen of the grand jury,

It is not without some concern, that I am obliged at this time to be more particular in your charge, than for many preceding terms there hath been occasion. The many frights and terrors which the good people of this city have of late been put into, by repeated and unusual fires, and burning of houses, give us too much room to suspect, that some of them at least, did not proceed from mere chance, or common accidents; but on the contrary, from the premeditated malice and wicked pursuits of evil and designing persons; and therefore, it greatly behoves us to use our utmost diligence, by all lawful ways and means to discover the contrivers and perpetrators of such daring and flagitious undertakings: that, upon conviction, they may receive condign punishment; for although we have the happiness of living under a government which exceeds all others in the excellency of its constitution and laws, yet if those to whom the execution of them (which my lord Coke calls the life and soul of the law) is committed, do not exert themselves in a conscientious discharge of their respective duties, such laws which were intended for a terror to the evil-doer, and a protection to the good, will become a dead letter, and our most excellent constitution turned into anarchy and confusion; every one practising what he listeth, and doing what shall seem good in his own eyes: to prevent which, it is the duty of all grand juries to inquire into the conduct and behaviour of the people in their respective counties; and if, upon examination, they find any to have transgressed the laws of the land, to present them, that so they may by the court be put upon their trial, and then either to be discharged or punished according to their demerits.

I am told there are several prisoners now in jail, who have been committed by the city magistrates, upon suspicion of having been concerned in some of the late fires; and others, who under pretence of assisting the unhappy sufferers, by saving their goods from the flames, for stealing, or receiving them. This indeed, is adding affliction to the afflicted, and is a very great aggravation of such crime, and therefore deserves a narrow inquiry: that so the exemplary punishment of the guilty (if any such should be so found) may deter others from committing the like villainies; for this kind of stealing, I think, has not been often practised among us.

Gentlemen,

Arson, or the malicious and voluntary burning, not only a mansion house, but also any other house, and the out buildings, or barns, and stables adjoining thereto, by night or by day, is felony at common law; and if any part of the house be burned, the offender is guilty of felony, notwithstanding the fire afterwards be put out, or go out of itself.

This crime is of so shocking a nature, that if we have any in this city, who, having been guilty thereof, should escape, who can say he is safe, or tell where it will end?

Gentlemen,

Another Thing which I cannot omit recommending to your serious and diligent inquiry, is to find out and present all such persons who sell rum, and other strong liquor to negroes. It must be



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obvious to every one, that there are too many of them in this city; who, under pretence of selling what they call a penny dram to a negro, will sell to him as many quarts or gallons of rum, as he can steal money or goods to pay for.

How this notion of its being lawful to sell a penny dram, or a pennyworth of rum to a slave, without the consent or direction of his master, has prevailed, I know not; but this I am sure of, that there is not only no such law, but that the doing of it is directly contrary to an act of the assembly now in force, for the better regulating of slaves. The many fatal consequences flowing from this prevailing and wicked practice, are so notorious, and so nearly concern us all, that one would be almost surprised, to think there should be a necessity for a court to recommend a suppression of such pernicious houses: thus much in particular; now in general.

My charge, gentlemen, further is, to present all conspiracies, combinations, and other offences, from treasons down to trespasses; and in your inquiries, the oath you, and each of you have just now taken will, I am persuaded, be your guide, and I pray God to direct and assist you in the discharge of your duty. Court adjourned until to-morrow morning ten o'clock.

The grand jury having been informed, that Mary Burton could give them some account concerning the good stolen from Mr. Hogg's, sent for her this morning, and ordered she should be sworn; the constable returned and acquainted them, that she said she would not be sworn, nor give evidence; whereupon they ordered the constable to get a warrant from a magistrate, to bring her before them. The constable was some time gone, but at length returned, and brought her with him; and being asked why she would not be sworn, and give her evidence? she told the grand jury she would not be sworn; and seemed to be under some great uneasiness, or terrible apprehensions; which gave suspicion that she knew something concerning the fires that had lately happened: and being asked a question to that purpose, she gave no answer; which increased the jealousy that she was privy to them; and as it was thought a matter of the utmost concern, the grand jury was very importunate, and used many arguments with her, in public and private, to persuade her to speak the truth, and tell all she knew about it. To this end, the lieutenant governor's proclamation was read to her, promising indemnity, and the reward of one hundred pounds to any person, confederate or not, who should make discovery, etc. She seemed to despise it, nor could the grand jury by any means, either threats or promises, prevail upon her, though they assured her withal, that she should have the protection of the magistrates, and her person be safe and secure from harm; but hitherto all was in vain: therefore, the grand jury desired alderman Bancker to commit her; and the constable was charged with her accordingly; but before he had got her to jail, she considered better of it, and resolved to be sworn, and give her evidence in the afternoon. Accordingly, she being sworn, came before the grand jury; but as they were proceeding to her examination, and before they asked her any questions, she told them she would acquaint them with what she knew relating to the goods stolen from Mr. Hogg's, but would say nothing about the fires.

This expression thus, as it were providentially, slipping from the evidence, much alarmed the grand jury; for, as they naturally concluded, it did by construction amount to an



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affirmative, that she could give an account of the occasion of the several fires; and therefore, as it highly became those gentlemen in the discharge of their trust, they determined to use their utmost diligence to sift out the discovery, but still she remained inflexible, till at length, having recourse to religious topics, representing to her the heinousness of the crime which she would be guilty of, if she was privy to, and could discover so wicked a design, as the firing houses about our ears; whereby not only people's estates would be destroyed, but many person might lose their lives in the flames: this she would have to answer for at the day of judgment, as much as any person immediately concerned, because she might have prevented this destruction, and would not; so that a most damnable sin would lie at her door; and what need she fear from her divulging it; she was sure of the protection of the magistrates? or the grand jury expressed themselves in words to the same purpose; which arguments at last prevailed, and she gave the following evidence, which however, notwithstanding what had been said, came from her, as if still under some terrible apprehensions or restraints.

Deposition, No. 1.-Mary Burton, being sworn, deposeth,

1. "That Prince (a) and Caesar (b) brought the things of which they had robbed Mr. Hogg, to her master, John Hughson's house, and that they were handed in through the window, Hughson, his wife, and Peggy receiving them, about two or three o'clock on a Sunday morning. (c) 2. "That Caesar, prince, and Mr. Philipse's negro man (Cuffee) used to meet frequently at her master's house, and that she had heard them (the negroes) talk frequently of burning the fort; and that they would go down to the Fly (d) and burn the whole town; and that her master and mistress said, they would aid and assist them as much as they could. 3. "That in their common conversation they used to say, that when all this was done, Caesar should be governor, and Hughson, her master, should be king. 4. "That Cuffee used to say, that a great many people had too much, and others too little; that his old master had a great deal of money, but that, in a short time, he should have less, and that he (Cuffee) should have more. 5. "That at the same time when the things of which Mr. Hogg was robbed, were brought to her master's house, they brought some indigo and bees wax, which was likewise received by her master and mistress. 6. "That at the meetings of the three aforesaid negroes, Caesar, Prince and Cuffee, at her master's house, they used to say, in their conversations, that when they set fire to the town, they would do it in the night, and as the white people came to extinguish it, they would kill and destroy them. 7. "That she has known at times, seven or eight guns in her master's house, and some swords, and that she has seen twenty or thirty negroes at one time in her master's house; and that at such large meetings, the three aforesaid negroes, Cuffee, Prince and Caesar, were generally present, and most active, and that they used to say, that the other negroes durst not refuse to do what they commanded them, and they were sure that they had a number sufficient to stand by them. 8. "That Hughson (her master) and her mistress used to threaten, that if she, the deponent, ever made mention of the goods stolen from Mr. Hogg, they would poison her; and the negroes swore, if ever she published, or discovered the design of burning the town, they would burn her whenever they met her. 9. "That she never saw any white person in company



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when they talked of burning the town, but her master, her mistress, and Peggy."

This evidence of a conspiracy, not only to burn the city, but also destroy and murder the people, was most astonishing to the grand jury, and that any white people should become so abandoned as to confederate with slaves in such an execrable and detestable purpose, could not but be very amazing to every one that heard it; what could scarce be credited; but that the several fires had been occasioned by some combination of villains, was, at the time of them, naturally to be collected from the manner and circumstances attending them.

The grand jury therefore, as it was a matter of the utmost consequence, thought it necessary to inform the judges concerning it, in order that the most effectual measures might be concerted, for discovering the confederates; and the judges were acquainted with it accordingly.

SUPREME COURT

Friday, May 1.

Present, the second and third justices.

The king against Caesar and prince, negroes. On trial.

The jury called, and the prisoners making no challenge, the following persons were sworn, viz.:

Roger French, John Groesbeek, John Richard, Abraham Kipp, George Witts, John Thurman, Patrick Jackson, Benjamin Moore, William Hamersley, John Lashier, Joshua Sleydall, John Shurmur.

These two negroes were arraigned on two indictments, the twenty fourth of April last; the one for their entering the dwelling house of Robert Hogg, of this city, merchant, on the first day of March then last past, with intent then and there to commit some felony; and for feloniously stealing and carrying away then and there the goods and chattels of the said Robert Hogg, of the value of four pounds five shillings sterling, against the form of the statutes in such case made and provided, and against the peace of our sovereign lord the king, his crown and dignity.

The other for their entering the dwelling house of Abraham Meyers Cohen in this city, merchant, on the first day of March with the intent then and there to commit some felony; and for feloniously stealing and carrying away then and there the goods and chattels of the said Abraham Meyers Cohen of the value of five pounds sterling, against the form of the statutes, etc. And against the king's peace, etc.

To each of which indictments they pleaded, not guilty.

The Attorney General having opened both the indictments, he with Joseph Murray, Esq. of council for the king, proceeded to examine the witnesses, viz.,

For the king, Mrs. Hogg, Mrs. Boswell, Christopher Wilson, Rachina Guerin, Mr. Robert Hogg, Mr. Robert Watts, Margaret Sorubiero, alias Kerry, Abraham Meyers Cohen, James Mills, Thomas Wenman, John Moore, Esq. Cornelius Brower, Anthony Ham, Mary Burton.

For the prisoners, Alderman Bancker, Alderman Johnson, John Auboyneau.

The prisoners upon their defence denied the charge against them. And,

The evidence being summed up, which was very strong and full, and the jury charged, they withdrew; and being returned, found them guilty of the indictments.

Ordered, that the trials of the Hughsons and Margaret Kerry, be



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put off until Wednesday of the 6th inst.
Court adjourned until Monday morning, 4th May, at ten o'clock.
(a) Caesar.

SUPREME COURT Friday, May 8

Present, the second and third justices.

The king against Caesar and Prince, negroes.

The prisoners having been capitally convicted on two several indictments for felony, and being brought to the bar the court proceeded to give sentence; which was passed by the second justice as followeth:

You, Caesar and Prince, the grand jury having found two indictments against each of you, for feloniously stealing and taking away from Mr. Hogg, and Mr. Meyers Cohen, sundry goods of considerable value. To these indictments you severally pleaded not guilty; and for your trials put yourselves upon God and the country; which country having found you guilty, it now only remains for the court to pronounce that judgment which the law requires, and the nature of your crimes deserve.

But before I proceed to sentence, I must tell you, that you have been proceeded against in the same manner as any white man, guilty of your crimes, would have been. You had not only the liberty of sending for your witnesses; asking them such questions as you thought proper; but likewise making the best defence you could; and as you have been convicted by twelve honest men upon their oaths, so the just judgement of God has at length overtaken you.

I have great reason to believe, that the crimes you now stand convicted of, are not the least of those you have been concerned in; for by your general characters you have been very wicked fellows, hardened sinners, and ripe, as well as ready, for the most enormous and daring enterprizes, especially you, Caesar: and as the time you have yet to live is to be but very short, I earnestly advise and exhort both of you to employ it in the most diligent and best manner you can, by confessing your sins, repenting sincerely of them, and praying God of his infinite goodness to have mercy on your souls: and as God knows the secrets of your hearts, and cannot be cheated or imposed upon, so you must shortly give an account to him, and answer for all your actions; and depend upon it, if you do not truly repent before you die, there is a hell to punish the wicked eternally. And as it is not in your powers to make full restitution for the many injuries you have done the public; so I advise both of you to do all that in you is, to prevent further mischiefs, by discovering such persons as have been concerned with you, in designing or endeavouring to burn this city, and to destroy its inhabitants. This I am fully persuaded is in your power to do if you will; if so, and you do not make such discovery, be assured God almighty will punish you for it, though we do not: therefore I advise you to consider this well, and I hope both of you will tell the truth.

And now, nothing further remains for me to say, but that you Caesar, and you Prince, are to be taken hence to the place whence you came, and from thence to the place of execution, and there you, and each of you, are to be hanged by the neck until you be dead. And I pray the Lord to have mercy on your souls.

Ordered, that their execution be on Monday next, the eleventh day of this instant, between the hours of nine and one of the same day. And further ordered that after the execution of the



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said sentence, the body of Caesar be hung in chains.
Court adjourned till Monday morning next ten o'clock.

August 29, Saturday (Old Style): A young white man who was being referred to as John Ury, presumably from Ireland, was [hanged](#) in [New-York](#). This probably wasn't his name. He had been charged with being a [Catholic](#) priest, which was a crime because General James Oglethorpe, the founder of Georgia, had allegedly uncovered a plot by Spanish priests "to burn every English town in the Colonies," and, also, with having made a practice of aiding and abetting the town's negroes, many of whom were Catholic. This hanging was the culmination of a spasm in which, over a period of a few weeks, a grand total of 21 white New-Yorkers had been interrogated under [torture](#) (4 of them then hanged), 14 black New-Yorkers burned at the stake, 20 black New-Yorkers hanged in chains, and 71 black New-Yorkers seized and sold into slavery. How had this spasm of fears of [servile insurrections](#) begun? Well, do you remember having learned in school of a poem by Samuel Woodworth, titled "The Old Oaken Bucket"? This poem refers to the Tea Water Pump at the junction of what is now Park Row and Roosevelt Street in New-York. Near this pump with its oaken bucket and its tea-colored water was a groggery and roominghouse for negroes, run by an immigrant shoemaker named Long John Hughson. It was rumored that Long John was a fence who bought stolen goods from the city's negro sneak-thieves. One of the tenants in this boardinghouse was this young white man, and in addition, the Hughsons were harboring, as their servant girl, a 16-year-old white orphan named Mary Burton. The *Flamborough*, an English man-'o-war, had entered New-York harbor with a Spanish prize ship they had captured, and aboard this prize ship were a number of black Catholics who insisted they were not slaves but freeborn sailors. Nevertheless they were of course sold into slavery and flogged repeatedly. Mary Burton, observing the young white tenant washing and bandaging the black men's whip wounds, and giving these enslaved men rum, went to the authorities with a tale which was almost certainly concocted in order to give her some notice. This crew had allegedly been overheard bragging about how, on February 28th, they had gotten some silverware and a little money at the Robert Hogg residence at Broad and South William Streets. The Hughson family and two of the black Catholic sailors, who were being referred to in New-York as "Prince" and "Caesar," were [tortured](#) by the police to obtain a confession. Then, suddenly, in March, there was a fire in Governor's House which destroyed a number of structures, including King's Chapel — and fires were breaking out all over the English settlement on Manhattan Island. There was a rumor that a negro had been seen jumping out of the window of a burning building. A woman named Earle was watching three black men walk together down Broadway when she heard one of them exclaim "Fire! Fire! Scorch! Be more mebbe by 'n by!" Soon there were 154 blacks being held in the New-York jail, "every black man who cannot give a satisfactory account of himself." Again Mary Burton stepped forward, this time to seek a reward of £100 which had been offered by the Common Council for evidence regarding this "Negro Plot to burn the city." She swore she had overheard Long John Hughson conspire with these black men to be made King of New-York, with the slave called "Caesar" to become Governor, and Catholic black man, called "Jack," to command a black army. A white prisoner who had been accused of robbing the Lieutenant Governor obtained his freedom by corroborating her story. Hundreds of white families fled the city while white mobs roamed the city looking for blacks to kill and succeeding in finding, and burning at the stake, two black New-Yorkers. On May 11th, "Prince" and "Caesar," having been tried and found guilty, were hanged. On June 12th, it taking longer to try and convict a white family, this Mr. and Mrs. Hughson and an associated Peggy Kerry of the boardinghouse were hanged. They had protested their entire innocence to the last. The body of Long John Hughson was gibbeted and hung in



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chains on Battery Point as “a lesson to other conspirators.” Near where the Nathan Hale statue now is in City Hall park, two black New-Yorkers called “Quace” and “Cuffee” were burned simultaneously, on stakes 50 feet apart, while the others were burned not there or collectively but individually, at a site about a hundred yards farther to the north. At this time Mary Burton stepped forward a third time, to identify Mr. Hughson’s mysterious tenant as a Catholic priest in plain clothes and as the ringleader of the Negro Plot to burn the city. And this man confessed that in fact he was a priest, and that he had said Mass many times, and that he had taught black adults and children to read and write. Finally, when after this execution of this priest being referred to as “John Ury,” Mary Burton’s allegations continued, and continued to become more and more preposterous, the authorities turned against her as well. She was stoned in the streets, and it is possible that she committed suicide or was confined in a madhouse.

ANTI-CATHOLICISM

December 31, Thursday (Old Style): Believing that Roman Catholic priests had on orders from Spain been inciting [slaves](#) to burn [New-York](#), and that this had been the cause of the series of suspicious fires that had broken out in the Big Apple during March and April of this year, 4 whites and 18 blacks were [hanged](#) and 13 blacks were burned at the stake. For their supposed complicity or affiliation in [servile insurrection](#), 71 slaves were “deported,” that is, sold south. (General James Oglethorpe would report this news to the trustees in a letter of May 28, 1742. He would also mention fires at Charles Town, and a Negro insurrection in Carolina in which Mr. Bathurst and above 20 white people and 40 Negroes were killed.)

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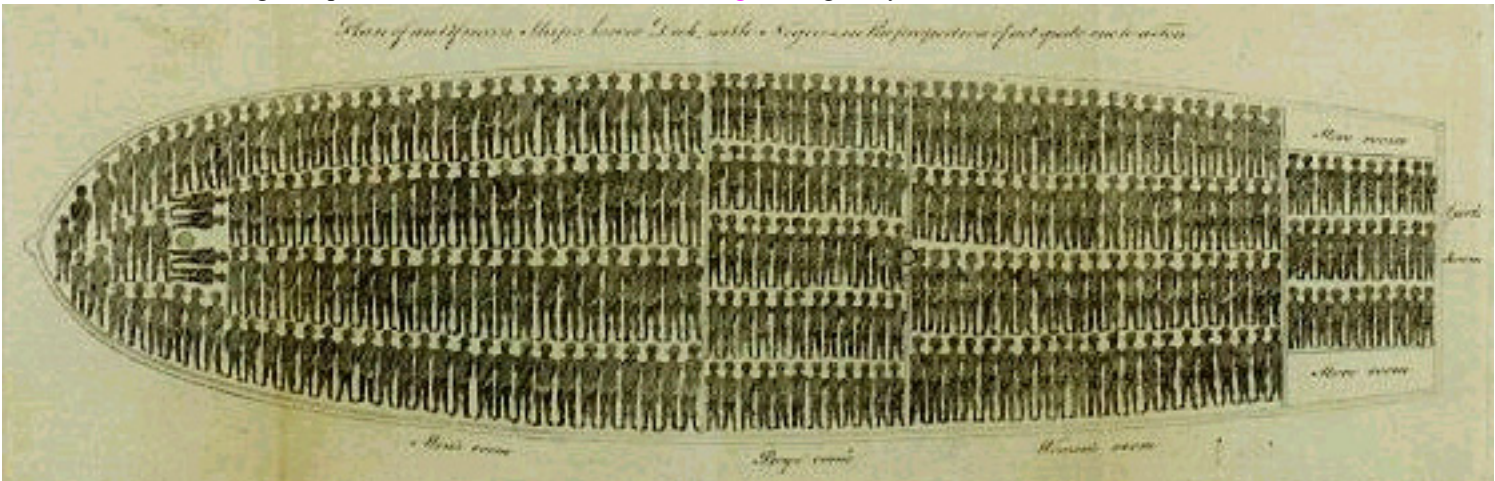
1747

The slaves of the cargo of a [Rhode Island negrero](#) commanded by Captain Beers rose when off Cape Coast Castle and murdered the captain and crew except the two mates — who managed to swim to shore.



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It has been estimated by Alexander Boyd Hawes that in this year in Rhode Island harbors alone, some 5 such vessels were being fitted out for the [international slave trade](#). If an average cargo of [slaves](#) was 109—as we have estimated on the basis of a number of known cargos— then a total of more than 540 souls would have been being transported over the dreadful [Middle Passage](#) during this year in Rhode Island bottoms alone.



In this year and the following one, [Rhode Island](#) would have two or three [privateer](#) vessels upon the seas, seeking the Spanish enemies of the British crown and the capture or destruction of their shipping.



"In the United States, every possible encouragement should be given to [privateering](#) in time of war with a commercial nation ... to distress and harass the enemy and compel him to peace."

— [Thomas Jefferson](#), 1812



"If [privateering](#) had not been already well established in the British Empire when [Rhode Island](#) first took to the sea, Rhode Islanders would have had to invent it. It suited them well.

— Hawes, Alexander Boyd, page 65⁴²



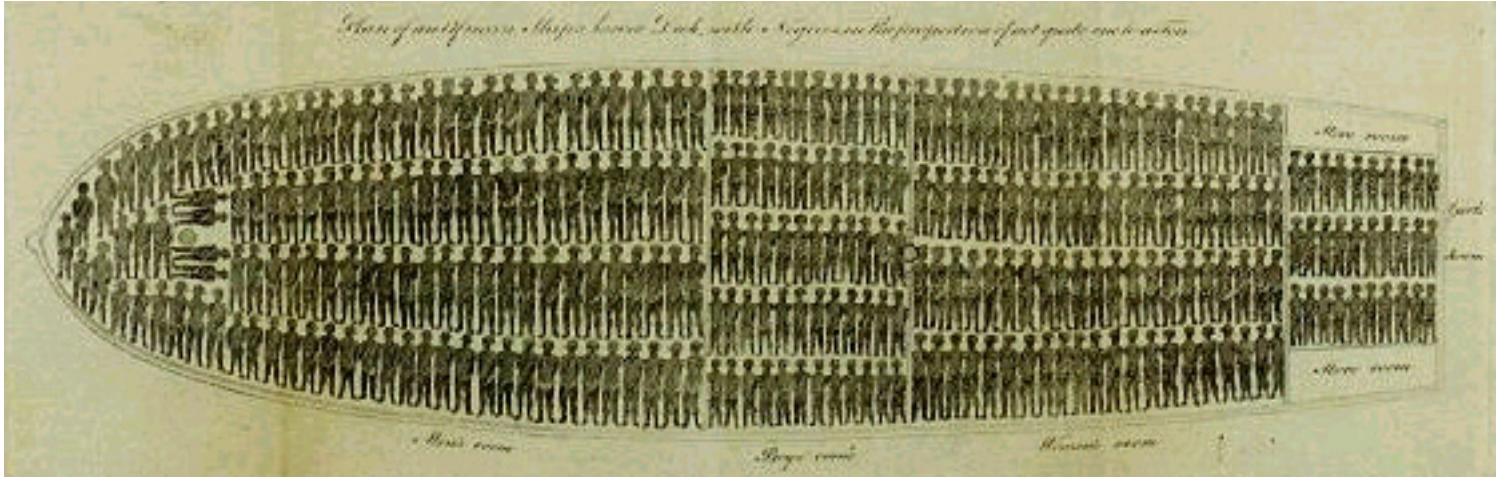
42. Hawes, Alexander Boyd. OFF SOUNDINGS: ASPECTS OF THE MARITIME HISTORY OF [RHODE ISLAND](#). Chevy Chase MD: Posterity Press, 1999

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1750

In [Rhode Island](#) harbors alone, during this year alone, it has been estimated by Alexander Boyd Hawes, some 6 [negreros](#) were being fitted out for the [international slave trade](#). If an average cargo of [slaves](#) was 109 –as we have estimated on the basis of a number of known cargos– then a total of more than 650 souls would have been being transported over the dreadful [Middle Passage](#) during this year in Rhode Island bottoms alone.



On October 5th of this year, Spain paid a sum of money to England and the “Assiento” deal that had been in effect since 1713 was at an end. The English “Royal African Company” that had had a monopoly in this area of the international slave trade was forced to declare bankruptcy.

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: It is stated that, in the twenty years from 1713 to 1733, fifteen thousand slaves were annually imported into America by the English, of whom from one-third to one-half went to the Spanish colonies.⁴³ To the company itself the venture proved a financial failure; for during the years 1729-1750 Parliament assisted the Royal Company by annual grants which amounted to £90,000,⁴⁴ and by 1739 Spain was a creditor to the extent of £68,000, and threatened to suspend the treaty. The war interrupted the carrying out of the contract, but the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle extended the limit by four years. Finally, October 5, 1750, this privilege was waived for a money consideration paid to England; the Assiento was ended, and the Royal Company was bankrupt.

By the Statute 23 George II., chapter 31, the old company was dissolved and a new “Company of Merchants trading to Africa” erected in its stead.⁴⁵ Any merchant so desiring was allowed to engage in the trade on payment of certain small duties, and such merchants formed a company headed by nine directors. This marked the total abolition of monopoly in the slave-trade, and was the form under which the trade was carried on until after the American Revolution.

That the slave-trade was the very life of the colonies had, by 1700, become an almost unquestioned axiom in British practical

43. Bandinel, ACCOUNT OF THE SLAVE TRADE, page 59. Cf. Bryan Edwards, HISTORY OF THE BRITISH COLONIES IN THE W. INDIES (London, 1798), Book VI.

44. From 1729 to 1788, including compensation to the old company, Parliament expended £705,255 on African companies. Cf. REPORT OF THE LORDS OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL, etc.

45. Various amendatory statutes were passed: e.g., 24 George II. ch. 49, 25 George II. ch. 40, 4 George III. ch. 20, 5 George III. ch. 44, 23 George III. ch. 65.

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economics. The colonists themselves declared slaves "the strength and sinews of this western world,"⁴⁶ and the lack of them "the grand obstruction"⁴⁷ here, as the settlements "cannot subsist without supplies of them."⁴⁸ Thus, with merchants clamoring at home and planters abroad, it easily became the settled policy of England to encourage the slave-trade. Then, too, she readily argued that what was an economic necessity in Jamaica and the Barbadoes could scarcely be disadvantageous to Carolina, Virginia, or even New York. Consequently, the colonial governors were generally instructed to "give all due encouragement and invitation to merchants and others, ... and in particular to the royal African company of England."⁴⁹ Duties laid on the importer, and all acts in any way restricting the trade, were frowned upon and very often disallowed. "Whereas," ran Governor Dobbs's instructions, "Acts have been passed in some of our Plantations in America for laying duties on the importation and exportation of Negroes to the great discouragement of the Merchants trading thither from the coast of Africa.... It is our Will and Pleasure that you do not give your assent to or pass any Law imposing duties upon Negroes imported into our Province of North Carolina."⁵⁰

The exact proportions of the slave-trade to America can be but approximately determined. From 1680 to 1688 the African Company sent 249 ships to Africa, shipped there 60,783 Negro slaves, and after losing 14,387 on the middle passage, delivered 46,396 in America. The trade increased early in the eighteenth century, 104 ships clearing for Africa in 1701; it then dwindled until the signing of the Assiento, standing at 74 clearances in 1724. The final dissolution of the monopoly in 1750 led—excepting in the years 1754-57, when the closing of Spanish marts sensibly affected the trade—to an extraordinary development, 192 clearances being made in 1771. The Revolutionary War nearly stopped the traffic; but by 1786 the clearances had risen again to 146.

To these figures must be added the unregistered trade of Americans and foreigners. It is probable that about 25,000 slaves were brought to America each year between 1698 and 1707. The importation then dwindled, but rose after the Assiento to perhaps 30,000. The proportion, too, of these slaves carried to the continent now began to increase. Of about 20,000 whom the English annually imported from 1733 to 1766, South Carolina alone received some 3,000. Before the Revolution, the total exportation to America is variously estimated as between 40,000 and 100,000 each year. Bancroft places the total slave population of the continental colonies at 59,000 in 1714, 78,000 in 1727, and 293,000 in 1754. The census of 1790 showed 697,897 slaves in the United States.⁵¹

In colonies like those in the West Indies and in South Carolina

46. Renatus Enys from Surinam, in 1663: Sainsbury, CAL. STATE PAPERS, COL. SER., AMERICA AND W. INDIES, 1661-68, § 577.

47. Thomas Lynch from Jamaica, in 1665: Sainsbury, CAL. STATE PAPERS, COL. SER., AMERICA AND W. INDIES, 1661-68, § 934.

48. Lieutenant-Governor Willoughby of Barbadoes, in 1666: Sainsbury, CAL. STATE PAPERS, COL. SER., AMERICA AND W. INDIES, 1661-68, § 1281.

49. Smith, HISTORY OF NEW JERSEY (1765), p. 254; Sainsbury, CAL. STATE PAPERS, COL. SER., AMERICA AND W. INDIES, 1669-74, §§ 367, 398, 812.

50. N.C. COL. REC., V. 1118. For similar instructions, cf. PENN. ARCHIVES, I. 306; DOC. REL. COL. HIST. NEW YORK, VI. 34; Gordon, HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, I. letter 2; MASS. HIST. SOC. COLL., 4th Ser. X. 642.

51. These figures are from the above-mentioned REPORT OF THE LORDS OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL, Vol. II. Part IV. Nos. 1, 5. See also Bancroft, HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES (1883), II. 274 ff; Bandinel, ACCOUNT OF THE SLAVE TRADE, p. 63; Benezet, CAUTION TO GREAT BRITAIN, etc., pp. 39-40, and HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF GUINEA, ch. xiii.



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and Georgia, the rapid importation into America of a multitude of savages gave rise to a system of slavery far different from that which the late Civil War abolished. The strikingly harsh and even inhuman slave codes in these colonies show this. Crucifixion, burning, and starvation were legal modes of punishment.⁵² The rough and brutal character of the time and place was partly responsible for this, but a more decisive reason lay in the fierce and turbulent character of the imported Negroes. The docility to which long years of bondage and strict discipline gave rise was absent, and insurrections and acts of violence were of frequent occurrence.⁵³ Again and again the danger of planters being "cut off by their own negroes"⁵⁴ is mentioned, both in the islands and on the continent. This condition of vague dread and unrest not only increased the severity of laws and strengthened the police system, but was the prime motive back of all the earlier efforts to check the further importation of slaves.

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On the other hand, in New England and New York the Negroes were merely house servants or farm hands, and were treated neither better nor worse than servants in general in those days. Between these two extremes, the system of slavery varied from a mild serfdom in Pennsylvania and New Jersey to an aristocratic caste system in Maryland and Virginia.

November 14, Wednesday (Old Style): According to the [Maryland Gazette](#) (Green), published in Annapolis, the [Bristol, Rhode Island](#) ship *King David* had encountered some difficulties from an unruly cargo:



By Capt. Tarr who arrived a few days ago from St. Kitts, we have the following account that was sent him by Hamilton Montgomery, belonging to the ship *King David* of [Bristol](#), bound from the coast of Guinea, viz. That on the 8th day of May last, the [slaves](#) on board the said ship rose about 5 o'clock in the morning, none of them being in irons on board.—The insurrection was contrived and begun by 15 that had for a considerable time been treated with the same freedom as the white men; and a great many of the latter dying, encouraged them to the design.—As the chief of these slaves spoke very good English, he often convers'd with the captain in his cabin, where all the arms were loaded.—and consulting with his comrades, knowing the small strength of the white men, they at once flew into the cabin, and secured the arms in a few minutes, kill'd the captain and five of the people, thereby putting it out of the power of the remainder of the ship's crew to make any resistance, so that they got down the hold to save themselves. But the head of the Negroes call'd to them, and told them, if they would come upon deck and surrender, he would save all their lives; which they soon did, except the chief mate, who remain'd in the

52. Compare earlier slave codes in South Carolina, Georgia, Jamaica, etc.; also cf. Benezet, *HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF GUINEA*, page 75; *REPORT OF THE LORDS OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL*, etc.

53. Sainsbury, *CAL. STATE PAPERS, COL. SER., AMERICA AND W. INDIES*, 1574-1660, pp. 229, 271, 295; 1661-68, §§ 61, 412, 826, 1270, 1274, 1788; 1669-74., §§ 508, 1244; Bolzius and Von Reck, *JOURNALS* (in *Force, TRACTS*, Vol. IV. No. 5, pages 9, 18); *PROCEEDINGS OF GOVERNOR AND ASSEMBLY OF JAMAICA IN REGARD TO THE MAROON NEGROES* (London, 1796).

54. Sainsbury, *CAL. STATE PAPERS, COL. SER., AMERICA AND W. INDIES*, 1661-68, § 1679.



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hold for some hours after; but sending down a white boy to acquaint him, if he did not come upon deck, they would come down and cut him to pieces; he thereupon came up, and they directly put him in irons, as they had all the others before: About eight of the clock the same evening, they threw overboard nine of the white men alive, with their irons on: The chief mate was also brought on the gunnel, to be serv'd in the same manner; but one of the head Negroes interposed, and said, Who must take care of the ship? and withal declared, that if they destroy'd him, he would kill the first man that attempted it; whereupon they saved his life.—Having let the ship drive with wind and tide for 24 hours, they at last insisted to have her carried to the Gold Coast, or Calabar, or St. Thomas's, an isle near the coast of Guiney; but the head Negro being a fellow of more sense than common, being persuaded there was no possibility of getting there, it was agreed upon to go where no white man liv'd; and Desiada was pitch'd upon, which they made on the 14th of May; and at 6 in the evening the Negroes obliged the chief mate to hoist out the boat, and they then put two white men and four Negroes on board to go for the isle; and if there were any Whites liv'd there, they were to return and kill the remainder of the crew.—But as the relator writes, he afterwards heard that they did not reach the island, and that he heard nothing of them 'til he got the ship to an anchor at Grand tier point, in Teage, a French island, on the 10th.—Where the French, upon giving some small assistance, not so much as venturing their lives, or anything like it, charged the expences to 3000 l. currency.—What further was done with the ship, or the Negroes, he does not write.

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1754



In [Boston](#) during this year, Elizabeth Creighton was whipped when she was found to be cohabiting with a negro man. Let's have none of that interracial stuff!

After the buildings of C. Croft, Esq., of Charleston, South Carolina were torched by his female [slaves](#), two of them were punished in an exemplary manner by being burned alive. Let's have none of that [servile insurrection](#) stuff!

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: We find in the planting colonies all degrees of advocacy of the trade, from the passiveness of Maryland to the clamor of Georgia. Opposition to the trade did not appear in Georgia, was based almost solely on political fear of insurrection in Carolina, and sprang largely from the same motive in Virginia, mingled with some moral repugnance. As a whole, it may be said that whatever opposition to the slave-trade there was in the planting colonies was based principally on the political fear of insurrection.



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1755

September: In Charlestown in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the [slaves](#) Mark, Phillis, and Phebe, along with Quaco and Robin, were convicted of murdering the slavemaster, Captain John Codman.⁵⁵

Having ascertained that their master had, by his will, made them free at his death, they poisoned him in order to obtain their liberty so much the sooner.

Phillis, since she was a woman, was [burned alive](#). Mark, since he was a man and, knowing how to read and write, the evident leader of the slave conspiracy,⁵⁶ was dragged by horses to his place of execution on the town common, throttled, disemboweled⁵⁷ and [beheaded](#), and then his body was hung up in chains by the side of the public thoroughfare.

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55. Captain John Codman was the son of Stephen Codman and Elizabeth Randall Codman of Charlestown, born on October 4, 1696. He married Parnell Foster, daughter of Richard Foster, and she died on September 15, 1752, at the age of 56.

56. He was known, for instance, to have read the BIBLE through.

57. The records suggest he was noticed to be already dead, rather than merely unconscious, while he was being disemboweled.



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1759

August: There was yet another [servile insurrection](#) being plotted in Charleston, South Carolina.

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: We find in the planting colonies all degrees of advocacy of the trade, from the passiveness of Maryland to the clamor of Georgia. Opposition to the trade did not appear in Georgia, was based almost solely on political fear of insurrection in Carolina, and sprang largely from the same motive in Virginia, mingled with some moral repugnance. As a whole, it may be said that whatever opposition to the slave-trade there was in the planting colonies was based principally on the political fear of insurrection.

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1760

There was another [servile insurrection](#) on the island of Jamaica:



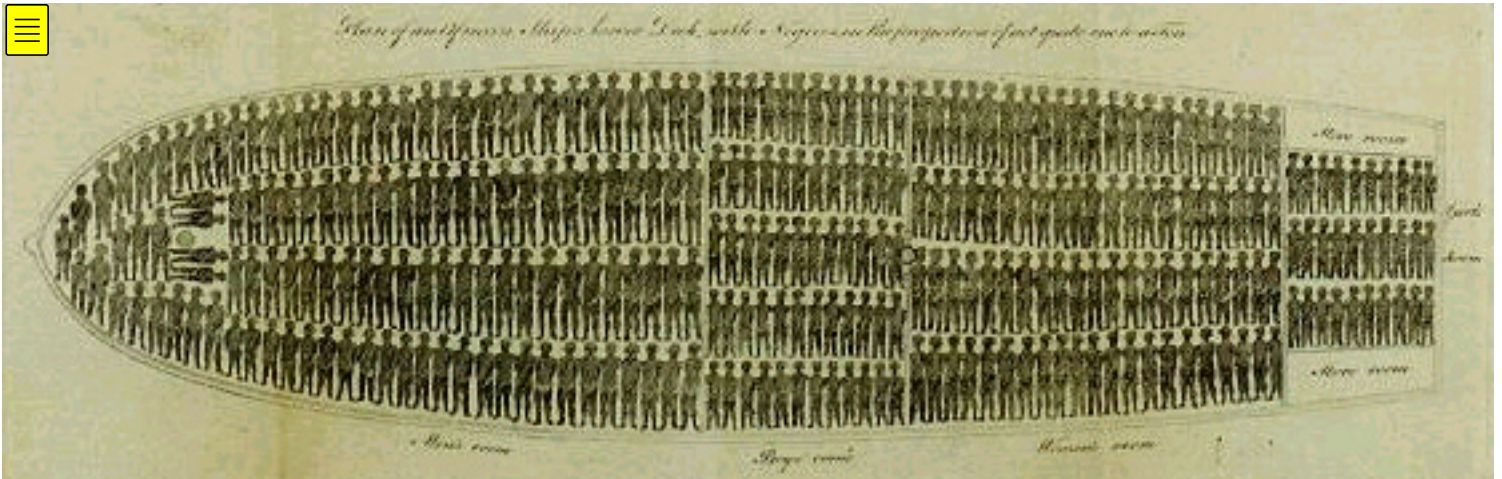
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1831	slave uprising on Jamaica

SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1761

In [Rhode Island](#) harbors during this year, it has been estimated by Alexander Boyd Hawes, some 5 vessels were being fitted out for the [international slave trade](#). If an average cargo of [slaves](#) was 109—as we have estimated on the basis of a number of known cargos—then a total of 645 souls were transported during this year in Rhode Island bottoms alone. Examples from this year include the Rhode Island sloop *Africa* carrying a cargo of 60 slaves, the brig *Charming Abigail* carrying a cargo of 145, the sloop *Diamond* carrying 79, again the sloop *Diamond* again carrying 79 (?), the sloop *Dolphin* carrying 94, the sloop *Prince George* carrying 40, the sloop *Sally* carrying 130, and the sloop *Three Friends* carrying 73.



Captain Nichols of Boston lost 40 of the slaves of a cargo due to a revolt, but managed to save his vessel.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

October: There was another [servile insurrection](#) in Kingston, Jamaica.

December: There was [servile insurrection](#) on the island of Bermuda. The plot to destroy the whites was by accident discovered. One man would be burned alive, one would be hanged, and 11, according to the received account, would be “condemned” (I don’t know for sure, but I imagine that such a term in such a context would amount to being worked to death in a labor crew in the fields).

December 2, Wednesday,: The Royal Governors were instructed to obtain permission from Parliament before purchasing Indian lands or making grants on Indian lands.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1763

February 23, Wednesday: Cuffy launched a [servile insurrection](#) against the Dutch of Berbice, Guyana that would prove so successful (if only temporarily, pending the arrival of European reinforcements) that there is now a statue in his honor.



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1764

The Sugar Act of 1760, putting a tax of six cents per gallon upon the molasses obtained in the Caribbean in exchange for the [cod](#), vegetables, wheat, and Indian maize of the North American colonies, had been defeated through contraband trade. Britain's attempt to obtain a revenue stream from its colonies was a failure. The British Parliament in this year tinkered with the duties, lowering this oppressive tax upon [molasses](#) but placing instead duties on [sugar](#) and on Madeira [wine](#). The idea they had was that since the substitute for Madeira wine was Port wine, and since Port wine was available only from British merchants, the colonists would switch from Madeira to Port. However, the practice was to trade a middle-grade cure of cod, known as the Madeira cure, for Madeira wine. This tax tinkering would also be a failure, as the colonists would switch to the drinking of [rum](#).

SWEETS
WITHOUT
SLAVERY

During this year the slaves of Jamaica were plotting [servile insurrection](#) — although nothing would come of it.

The free men of color in Haiti (*Hispaniola*) were prohibited from the practices of medicine and pharmacology.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1767

There was [servile insurrection](#) in Grenada.

SLAVE REVOLT

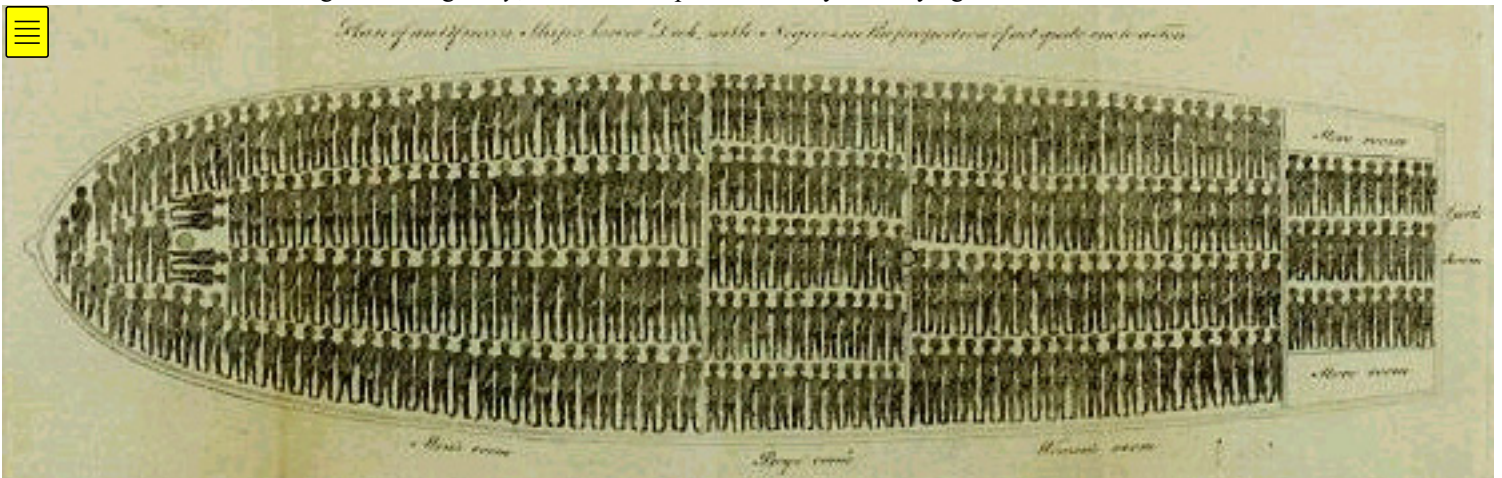
SERVILE INSURRECTION

1768

One member of the Jewish congregation in [Newport](#), [Aaron Lopez](#), owned some 30 oceangoing vessels and more than 100 coastal schooners. He had the honor of occupying the special raised President's Seat at the side of the [Touro Synagogue](#), separate from the other worshippers inside a railing. He and his family involved themselves heavily in the molasses, rum and [slave](#) trade.⁵⁸ The other major American hub of their trading ring was in Charleston, South Carolina.



In [Rhode Island](#) harbors in this year, it is estimated by Alexander Boyd Hawes, some 18 vessels were being fitted out for the [international slave trade](#). If an average cargo of slaves was 109—as we have estimated on the basis of a number of known cargos—then a total of well over 1,950 souls were being transported in Rhode Island bottoms alone. Examples from this year include the Rhode Island brig *Hannah*, carrying a cargo of 165 slaves, the ship *King George*, carrying a cargo of 230, the sloop *Patty*, carrying 130, the brig *Polly*, carrying 154, and again the brig *Polly*, on another trip in the same year carrying 130.



Captain John Wilson, of General Gage's 59th regiment in [Boston](#), attempted to incite [servile insurrection](#) among some 300 black [slaves](#) in that metropolis by assuring them that the military had seized the port in an attempt to secure their freedom and that if they would fight for their freedom in conjunction with the military, "they would be able to drive the Liberty Boys to the devil."

58. We immediately recollect that in the BIBLE, this man's namesake had led people **out of** slavery.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

October: The Selectmen of [Boston](#) filed a complaint against the activities of Captain John Wilson of General Gage's 59th regiment in Boston, in that he was attempting to incite [servile insurrection](#) among the some 300 black [slaves](#) in that metropolis by assuring them that the military had seized the port in an attempt to secure their freedom and that if they would fight for their freedom in conjunction with the military, "they would be able to drive the Liberty Boys to the devil." He was arrested and bound over for trial, but British officials were able to arrange the quashing of this indictment. Captain Wilson fled the city.



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1770

January 25, Thursday: The following report of [servile insurrection](#) appeared in the Virginia Gazette, a newspaper of Williamsburg:

Some time about [Christmas](#) last, a tragical affair happened at a plantation in North Wales, Hanover county, belonging to Bowler Cocke, Esq; the particulars of which, according to the accounts we have received, are as follows, viz. The Negroes belonging to the plantation having long been treated with too much lenity and indulgence, were grown extremely insolent and unruly; Mr. Cocke therefore had employed a new Steward. The Steward's deputy is a young man; had ordered one of the slaves to make a fire every morning very early; the fellow did not appear till sunrise; on being examined why he came not sooner, he gave most insolent and provoking answers, upon which, the young man going to chastise him, the fellow made a stroke at him with an axe (or some such weapon) that was in his hand, but happily missed him. The young man then closed with him, and having the advantage, a number of the other slaves came to the negro's assistance, and beat the young man severely. At last the ringleader (a very sensible fellow) interceded for him, on which they desisted. The young man then made off as fast as he could, to procure assistance to quell them. Whilst he was gone, they tied up the Steward, and also a poor innocent, harmless old man, who over looked a neighbouring quarter, and on hearing the uproar, had paddled across the creek to know the cause of it. These they whipped till they were raw from the neck to the waistband. At that time the young man returned, with about twelve white men, and two little boys carrying each a gun. They released the two unhappy sufferers, and then proceeded to a barn, where they found a large body of the Negroes assembled (some say thirty, some fifty) on whom they tried to prevail by persuasion, but the slaves, dead to all they said, rushed upon them with a desperate fury, armed with clubs and staves; one of them knocked down a white man, and was going to repeat the blow to finish him, which one of the boys seeing, levelled his piece, discharged its contents into the fellow's breast, and brought him to the dust. Another fellow having also knocked down another of the Whites, was, in the same manner, shot by the other boy. In short, the battle continued sometime desperate, but another of the Negroes having his head almost cut off with a broad sword, and five of them being wounded, the rest fled. The accounts vary; some say three were killed upon the spot, and five wounded, others that two were killed, and five wounded, one of whom died soon after. It is said they had threatened to kill the Steward as soon as he came to the plantation. The ringleader was one of the slain.

RACE SLAVERY

February 15, Thursday: According to the Supplement page of the New York Journal, or General Advertiser:

WILLIAMSBURG, Jan. 25. Last Tuesday two Negroes then belonging to Mr. James Hubbard, of this city, were tried at York for setting fire to the dwelling-house upon his plantation. One of them, named Isaac, was convicted, and



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

is to be hanged on Friday the 2d of next month: the other fellow, named Davie, was cleared. It is very shrewdly suspected, however, that he is the greatest villain of the two, and that though he was not the perpetrator, he instigated the other to this atrocious crime.

Last week Mr. Benjamin Warburton, of James City county, attempting to seize a Negro fellow in his kitchen, whom he suspected to be a runaway, was stabbed by him in the side, but not mortally; but had it not been for a faithful dog, who flew at the Negro, and tore his leg almost to pieces, Mr. Warburton, in all probability, would have lost his life. The dog received two wounds in the fray. This fellow was a hymn singer, and had a book of them in his pocket.

Some Negroes of Colonel Bowler Cocke's at a quarter of his in Hanover county, having an overseer set over them lately, whom they understood to be very severe in his discipline, came to a resolution to be before hand with him; and accordingly, when he came into a tobacco house, where they were at work, they seized him, tied him up, and whipped him most cruelly. Some of them were even for taking away his life. As soon as he got released he alarmed some of the neighbours, who came armed to the place (where the Negroes still were) and on ordering them to come out, which they refused, and threatening to kill the first man that entered, the people went up to the barn and shot two of them (one the ringleader) dead on the spot. Another was mortally wounded, who died the next day, and some others were wounded likewise.

RACE POLITICS

RACE SLAVERY

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1775

About the middle of July 1775: Lord Dunmore, the royal governor of [Virginia](#), ceased to exercise the functions of his office when he, his wife, and their children took refuge on board the British man-of-war *Fowey*. From aboard ship he attempted to instigate the American [slaves](#) to [servile insurrection](#). White Virginians responded by assembling for a convention. The British frigates then shelled the port of Hampton on Hampton Bay and the royal governor proclaimed martial law. Under martial law he “declared free all slaves or servants, black or white, belonging to rebels, provided they would take up arms and join the royal troops.” The governor came ashore at Norfolk and hundreds of loyalists and black Americans went there to join with him.

December 9, Saturday: The first Chamber of Commerce in America was formed during a meeting at Mrs. Swallow’s Tavern in [Charleston, South Carolina](#).


Lord Dunmore, the royal governor of [Virginia](#), having taken refuge on board British warships, had been attempting to instigate American [slaves](#) into [servile insurrection](#). Under martial law he had “declared free all slaves or servants, black or white, belonging to rebels, provided they would take up arms and join the royal troops,” and he had come ashore at Norfolk and assembled a force made up of hundreds of loyalists, black Americans seeking their freedom, and 200 soldiers of the British Army.

On this day these forces a [GO TO MASTER INDEX OF WARFARE](#) successfully. The Royal Governor would again take refuge aboard a British warship.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1776

 Yet another servile insurrection was being crushed on the benighted island of Jamaica:



1640-1713	seven slave revolts in the islands of the British West Indies
1655	With Jamaica in transition between Spanish control and English control, some 1,500 slaves escaped into the mountains to form maroon communities.
1656	Juan de Bolas led many of the escaped slaves in the maroon communities of the mountains of Jamaica down to the plains and the coast with a deal in which the English granted pardon and freedom. Many maroons, however, would elect to remain in the mountains.
1668	“Lobby’s rebellion” on Jamaica — several hundred black slaves escaped to the mountains.
1725-1740	1st Maroon War on Jamaica
March 1, 1738-1739	The 1st Maroon War on Jamaica ended in a treaty guaranteeing freedom for the maroons, the deal being that henceforward they would capture and turn in for a reward any new slave or bond-laborer escapees.
1760	slave uprising on Jamaica
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SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1780

The Royal Gazette, published in Kingston, Jamaica by David Douglass and William Aikman, printers to the King's Most Excellent Majesty for Jamaica and its Dependencies (this had previously been known as The Jamaica Mercury and Kingston Weekly Advertiser), registered that:

A gang of run-away Negroes of above 40 men, and about 18 women, have formed a settlement in the recesses of Four Mile Wood in St. David's [Jamaica]; are become very formidable to that neighbourhood, and have rendered travelling, especially to Mulattoes and Negroes, very dangerous; one of the former they have lately killed, belonging to Mr. Duncan Munro of Montrose, and taken a large quantity of Linen of his from his slaves on the road: they also have robbed many other persons servants, and stolen some cattle, and great numbers of sheep, goats, hogs, poultry &c. particularly a large herd of hogs from Mt. Rial of Tamarind Tree Penn. They are chiefly Congos, and declare they will kill every Mulatto and Creole Negro they can catch. BRISTOL, alias Three-finger'd Jack, is their Captain, and CAESAR, who belongs to Rozel estate, is their next officer. This banditti may soon become dangerous to the Public, if a PARTY, agreeable to the 40th or 66th Acts in Volume I of the laws of this Island, or the MAROONS, are not sent out against them; which should be applied for, and no doubt it would be ordered.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

Caribbean slaves had been being fed on the lowest grade of English salted beef, and then when it became cheaper, on the lowest grade of American salted cod, as fuel for their incessant labors in the sun. In Jamaica during the post-revolutionary-war period until 1787, with the British unable to accept the success of the American revolution and with land on the island far too valuable for the growing of sugar cane to allow it to be utilized for the growing of other foodstuffs, over a seven or eight year period some 15,000 surplus slaves would be starving to death.

SWEETS
WITHOUT
SLAVERY

In the seventeenth century, the strategy for sugar production, a labor-intensive agro-industry, was to keep the manpower cost down through slavery. At harvest-time, a sugar plantation was a factory with slaves working sixteen hours or more a day – chopping cane by hand as close to the soil as possible, burning fields, hauling cane to a mill, crushing, boiling. To keep working under the tropical sun, the slaves needed salt and protein. But plantation owners did not want to waste any valuable sugar planting space on growing food for the hundreds of thousands of Africans who were being brought to each small Caribbean island. The Caribbean produced almost no food. At first slaves were fed salted beef from England, but New England colonies soon saw the opportunity for salt cod as cheap, salted nutrition.

For salt cod merchants, the great advantage of this new trade was that it was a low-end market. Cured cod can be a very demanding product. Badly split fish, the wrong weather conditions during drying, too much salt, too little salt, bad handling – a long list of factors resulted in fish that was not acceptable to the discerning Mediterranean market. The West



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

Indies presented a growing market for the rejects, for anything that was cheap. In fact, West India was the commercial name for the lowest-quality salt cod.


In trade, it is an almost infallible natural law that a hungry low-end market, an eager dumping ground for the shoddiest work, is an irresistible market force. At first it offers an opportunity to sell of the mistakes that would otherwise have represented a loss. But producers increasingly turned to this fast, cheap, profitable product because it was easy. West India cure represented a steadily increasing percentage of the output of New England, Nova Scotia, and to a lesser degree, Newfoundland. Nova Scotia in particular specialized in a small, poor-quality, salted-and-dried product for the West Indies.



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1784

 Yet another [servile insurrection](#) was being suppressed on the island of Jamaica:

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SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1795

➡ On the island of Jamaica during this year and the next, the 2d Maroon War against escaped slaves:



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SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1796

Judge St. George Tucker of Virginia wrote on the evils of human [enslavement](#), not the least of which was the prospect of [servile insurrection](#):

I presume it is possible that an effectual remedy for the evils of slavery may at length be discovered. Whenever that happens, *the golden age of our country will begin*. Till then, ——
"Non hospes a hospite tutus Non Herus a Famulis, fratrum quoque gratia rara.



"I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return."

— [W.H. Auden](#), [September 1, 1939](#)



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SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1800

John Fawcett's serio-pantomime OBI; OR, [THREE-FINGER'D JACK](#) was performed at the Haymarket in London with music by Samuel Arnold:

But if white man kind [massa](#) be,
He heal the wound in negro's heart.

[SERVILE INSURRECTION](#)

William Earle, Junior, 19-year-old son of a bookseller in the Piccadilly area of London, prepared OBI; OR, THE HISTORY OF [THREEFINGERED JACK](#). IN A SERIES OF LETTERS FROM A RESIDENT IN JAMAICA TO HIS FRIEND IN ENGLAND for publication by his father's firm, Earle and Hemet.



In this same year in which [Denmark Vesey](#) was winning the East-Bay-Street Lottery and receiving enough money to purchase his own manumission from [slavery](#) (but not enough money to obtain the freedom of his children),⁵⁹ Gabriel Prosser (*circa* 1776-1800) and Jack Bowler were attempting a slave revolt near Richmond, Virginia — and in this year, also, [Nat Turner](#) was being born! These three men of 1800, Vesey, Prosser, and Turner, would later come to be regarded as the “Three Generals in the Lord’s Army.”

One group was to attack the prison which was being used as an arsenal, another was to capture the powder house, and another was to attack the city itself. If the citizens would not surrender, the rebels planned to kill all of the whites with the exception of three categories of white people, the three categories being [Quakers](#), Methodists, and Frenchmen. The “General Gabriel” conspiracy of about a thousand [slaves](#) to attack Richmond came to light after a severe storm washed out a bridge and caused a suspension of the attack (August 30) and the conspiracy was betrayed by two of the slaves. Governor James Monroe (the future president) ordered in the militia and 16 ringleaders and 19 others were [hanged](#) (October 7). Gabriel’s Insurrection would cause white Virginians to support plans to ship black Americans back to Africa.

Here is the Virginia “servile conspiracy” statute under which all the executions would take place:



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

If any negro or other slaves at any time consult, advise, or conspire to rebel, or make insurrection, or shall plot to conspire the murder of any person or persons whatsoever, every such consulting, plotting, or conspiring, shall be adjudged and deemed felony, and the slave or slaves convicted thereof in manner herein after directed, shall suffer death, and be utterly excluded all benefit of clergy.

— The Statutes at Large of Virginia, from
October Session 1792 to December Session 1806

SERVILE INSURRECTION



Judge St. George Tucker of Virginia thus described the general prospect of [servile insurrection](#):

The love of freedom is an inborn sentiment, which the God of nature has planted deep in the heart. Long may it be kept under by the arbitrary institutions of society; but, at the first favorable moment, it springs forth with a power which defies all check. This celestial spark, which fires the breast of the savage, which glows in that of the philosopher, is not extinguished in the bosom of the slave. It may be buried in the embers, but it *still lives*, and the breath of knowledge kindles it into a flame. Thus we find there never have been slaves in any country, who have not seized the first favorable opportunity to revolt. These, our hewers of wood and drawers of water, possess the power of doing us mischief, and are prompted to it by *motives which self-love dictates, which reason justifies*. Our sole security, then, consists in their ignorance of this power, and their means of using it — a security which we have lately found is not to be relied on, and which, small as it is, every day diminishes. Every year adds to the number of those who can read and write; and *the increase of knowledge is the principal agent in evolving the spirit we have to fear*.

* * *

By way of marking the prodigious change which a few years have made among that class of men, compare the late conspiracy with the revolt under Lord Dunmore. In the one case, a few solitary individuals flocked to that standard, under which they were sure to find protection. In the other, they, in a body, of their own accord, combine a plan for asserting their freedom, and rest their safety on success alone. The difference is, that then they sought freedom merely as a good; now they also claim it as a right.

* * *

Ignorant and illiterate as they yet are, they have maintained a correspondence, which, whether we consider its extent or duration, is truly astonishing.

59. Here's how this worked. Clearly under American law (everywhere except, perhaps, Louisiana) a slave could not protect property and therefore could own nothing. Vesey's owner could have seized the winnings of this lottery with or without saying thanks and he would have still been his slave. However, in the real world egregious conduct might lead to a throat slitting or a poisoning — not just everything you can legally do to another human being is always practical. Vesey's owner accepted the money and made out a manumission document.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT



August 30, Saturday: A storm forced suspension of a planned attack on Richmond VA by some thousand slaves (wild estimates ranged from 2,000 to 50,000) aimed at creating an independent black state in Virginia with Gabriel Prosser as its king. The three-pronged attack was to seize the arsenal, take the powder house, and kill all whites except Frenchmen, Methodists, and Quakers. During the delay due to washed-out bridges and inundated roads the conspiracy was being betrayed by two of the slaves but nevertheless they had come dangerously close to actually seizing control of that municipality — and, had they succeeded, it goes without question that the usual casual injustice and shameless cruelty of that city would have been superseded by another, more unusual, regime of injustice and shameless cruelty.

Here is a letter from Mosby Sheppard to Governor James Monroe, then governor of Virginia (future president of the USA), in regard to the activities of Thomas H. Prosser's [slave](#) Gabriel, as on file among the Letters Received by James Monroe at the Governor's Office, Record Group 3, Library of Virginia:

Sir

I have Just been informed that the Negroes were to rise (as they termed it) in the neighbourhood of Mr Tho: H. Prossers and to kill the neighbours Viz: Majr: Wm: Mosby Thoma H. Prosser and Mr Johnson from thence they were to proceed to Town where they would be joined by the Negroes of this place (Richmond) after which they were to take possession of the Arms and ammunition and then take possession of the Town.

Here they stoped; appearing much agitated. I then asked them two questions viz: When was it to take place! Ans to Night! who is the principal Man! Ans Prossers Gabriel. I have given you the substance of what I have hear'd and there is not a doubt in my mind but what my information is true and I have given you this information in order that the intended masacre may be prevented if possible.

I am with due respect,

Mosby Sheppard

Richmond Aug: 30 1800

N.B. I will here recite to you the manner in which I got this information. I was siting in the Compting room with the door shut and no one near except myself they knocked at the door and I let them in; they shut the door themselves and then began to tell what I have before recited.

M.S.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



September 21, Sunday: [William Blake](#) wrote to John Flaxman about his lodgings at Felpham:

We safely arrived at our cottage, which is more beautiful than I thought and more convenient. Mr. Hayley received us with his usual brotherly affection. I have begun to work. Felpham is a sweet place for study, because it is more spiritual than London. Heaven opens here on all sides her golden gates; her windows are not obstructed by vapours.

[Blake](#) wrote to Thomas Butts about his lodgings at Felpham:

We are safe arrived at our cottage without accident or hindrance. We had seven different chaises and as many different drivers. We travelled through a most beautiful country on a most glorious day. Our cottage is beautiful. If I should ever build



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

a palace it would be only my cottage enlarged. The villagers of Felpham are polite and modest. Meat is cheaper than in London. The sweet air and voices of winds, trees and birds, and the odours of the happy ground, makes it a dwelling for immortals.

A white gentleman of Richmond, Virginia described the events of the time:

By this time, you have no doubt heard of the conspiracy, formed in this country by the negroes, which, but for the interposition of Providence, would have put the metropolis of the State, and even the State itself, into their possession. A dreadful storm with a deluge of rain, which carried away the bridges and rendered the water courses every where impassable, prevented the execution of their plot. *It was extensive and vast in its design. Nothing could have been better contrived. The conspirators were to have seized on the magazine, the treasury, the mills, and the bridges across James river.* They were to have entered the city of Richmond in three places with fire and sword, to commence an indiscriminate slaughter, the French only excepted. They were then to have called on their fellow negroes and the friends of humanity throughout the continent, by proclamation, to rally round their standard. The magazine, which was defenceless, would have supplied them with arms for many thousand men. The treasury would have given them money, the mills bread, and the bridges would have enabled them to let in their friends, and keep out their enemies. Never was there a more propitious season for the accomplishment of their purpose. The country is covered with rich harvests of Indian corn; flocks and herds are every where fat in the fields; and the liberty and equality doctrine, nonsensical and wicked as it is, (in this land of tyrants and slaves,) is for electioneering purposes sounding and resounding through our valleys and mountains in every direction. The city of Richmond and the circumjacent country are in arms, and have been so for ten or twelve days past. The patrollers are doubled through the State, and the Governor, impressed with the magnitude of the danger, has appointed for himself three Aids de Camp. A number of conspirators have been hung, *and a great many more are yet to be hung.* The trials and executions are going on day by day. Poor deluded wretches! *Their democratic deluders, conscious of their own guilt, and fearful of the public vengeance, are most active in bringing them to punishment. "Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi"*! Two important facts have been established by the witnesses on the different trials. First, that the plan of the plot was drawn by two Frenchmen in Richmond, and by them given to the negro General Gabriel, who is not yet caught; and secondly, that in the meditated massacre, *not one Frenchman* was to be touched. It is moreover believed, though not positively known, that a great many of our profligate and abandoned whites (who are distinguished by the burlesque appellation of *democrats*) are implicated with the blacks, and would have joined them if they had commenced their operations. The particulars of this horrid affair you will probably see detailed in Davis' paper from Richmond, but certainly in Stewart's paper in Washington. The Jacobin printers and their friends are panic struck. Never was terror more strongly depicted in the countenances of men. They see, they feel, the fatal mischiefs that their preposterous principles and ferocious party spirit have brought upon us.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT



October 2, Thursday: [Nathaniel “Nat” Turner](#) was born in Southampton County, Virginia, near the Great Dismal Swamp in which as an adult he would seek refuge. Nat⁶⁰ was given the name Turner because his mother was a piece of property belonging to a white man named Benjamin Turner, and because under Virginia law the legal standing of the mother of a child determined the legal standing of her child. He emerged from his mother’s womb as the property of this Mr. Turner — but in the end he would find himself being [hanged](#) for having committed an act of **violence** and **violation** against another human being! He would dictate a confession, but in his confession, despite the fact that his contemporaries acknowledge him to have been an exceedingly intelligent man, he would have difficulty getting this to **make any sense at all**.

[SLAVERY](#)

The [Reverend Timothy Dwight](#) visited the [Reverend Gideon Hawley](#) on the reservation at Mashpee, Massachusetts.⁶¹ In *TRAVELS IN NEW ENGLAND AND NEW YORK*, published in 1821/1823 in London, the Reverend Dwight, who hadn’t seen Hawley since he had been a teenager, would write that “this gentleman was a most intimate friend of my parents. From his youth he had sustained as amiable and unexceptionable a character as can perhaps be found among uninspired men” (now there’s a lefthanded compliment, if ever there was one).

60. “Nat” = Nathaniel, but should we not use the name taught us by [Frederick Douglass](#)?

Otherwise, for consistency, wouldn’t we have to refer to Frederick Douglass and Nathaniel Hawthorne as Dred Douglass and Nat Hawthorne, or perhaps Dred Bailey and Nat Hawthorne? PC-people, here’s something to chew on!

61. The Reverend Dwight was a grandson of the [Reverend Jonathan Edwards](#), under whose instruction the Reverend Hawley had served.



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October 7, Tuesday: In Richmond, Virginia, a piece of the property of Thomas Prosser, known as “Gabriel Prosser,” and 15 other similarly hued pieces of property accused in the conflict with the established order of the city of Richmond at the end of August, were hanged. All the 31 years of his short life, another piece of property, this one known as Nat Turner, would be hearing of these incredible events.

SLAVERY

An undated memo from William M. Berkeley on file among the Letters Received by James Monroe at the Governor’s Office, Record Group 3, Library of Virginia:

*Letter Treasurer on the Subject of paying for Negroes executed
1800*

To His Excellency

Sir

The sum estimated by the Honorable Legislature as sufficient to discharge the claims for slaves executed being entirely exhausted, and as those claims are and will be greatly increased by the late serious insurrection, permit me to call the attention of your Excellency and the Honorable Board to the subject, and at the same time to solicit you to give me the earliest information, as a claim to a considerable amount has been presented, which I have requested the Gentleman to wait for until I could communicate with your Honorable Board

With sentiments of esteem & respect,

I remain your Humble servt.

W Wm Berkeley

The above is a copy of a letter sent to his Excellency a few days ago

A letter from John Hoomes et al. to Governor James Monroe, no date, that is on file in the same collection:

John Hoomes, George Buckner Daniel Coleman John Baylor Hay Battaile & Reuben Chapman Justices of the peace in the County of Caroline who composed a Court for the trail of Scipio a negro Slave the property of Paul Thilman for Conspiracy and insurrection, We whose names are hereunder written do recommend the said Scipio to his Excellency the Governor as an object of Mercy for the following reasons the Condemned Slave is a Young lad not above 18 or 19 years of Age, he appears to be a very ignorant Lad and lived on the same plantation with Mr. Thilmans man Thornton who it appears enlisted the said Scipio & who no doubt drew him into the Conspiracy

John Baylor

Geo: Buckner

Reuben Chapman

Danl. Coleman

John Hoomes

Hay Battaile

[on reverse] Scipio condemned in Caroline Pardoned Nov. 8 1800

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An Attestation as to the Valuation of Slaves Sentenced to Death, no date, in this same file:

His Excellency The Governor of Virginia

The following Slaves were tried and sentenced to death in Henrico County & Richmond Hustings Court— their valuations as fixed by the Court, as follows

*Jack alias Jack Ditcher belonging to the estate of Wm Bowler decd \$400.
Lewis to Dabney Williamson £110
Watt to Thomas Prosser £45
King to Philip N. Nicholas £80*

Adam Craig C.C.

Crimes Punishable by Death in England:

Year	Number
1800	150
1837	10





SLAVE REVOLT

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1802



Along the Roanoke River in Virginia, [slave](#) boatmen plotted [servile insurrection](#).

The mulatto [slave West Ford](#), whom some consider to be the only son of [George Washington](#), was brought to [Mount Vernon](#) with his new owner, Bushrod Washington. At Mount Vernon, West would be befriended by Washington's old valet, the crippled mulatto William Lee whom Washington had manumitted in his last will and testament, and would wind up as the caretaker of Washington's original tomb. Refer to <http://www.westfordlegacy.com/home.htm>.

Nancy Staines was born to [Jack and Oney Judge Staines](#) in [New Hampshire](#).



June 10, Thursday: A [servile insurrection](#) was discovered in northeastern [North Carolina](#). Or maybe not, maybe it was all just the jitters. At any rate a writing had been found in the possession of black [slaves](#), a document that was faded and not clear enough for any transcription — how suspicious is that? The court would examine 14 suspected black “organizers.”⁶² The following transcription of residual papers of Bertie County — a transcription faithfully prepared from the original court document by Joseph E. Holloway— although inherently problematic, provides a sense of the issue at hand:

The examination of Sundry Negro Slaves touching a conspiracy supposed to exist among the slave to rebel taken at Windsor before Justice assigned to keep them from the County of Bertie above named taken at Windsor this ninth day of June one hour and eighteen hundred and two.

The examination of George belonging to sir Edward Watson who being duly cautioned declares that about four weeks age he saw Boy (belonging to David Horne) passing on a Saturday evening along by the despondent who was employed at Koiquiss washing hides of his master — Despondent asked Boy why he came that way, Bob answered he was anxious to get to Windsor before Sunset that he might have an opportunity to go into the stores before they were shut, that he was going that day up to the Funeral at West Henry Hill old place — and did not like to walk through the field, meaning the field of Mr. D [David] Turner where Timothy Brandon lived. That if he, Bob, should go through the field that Brandon would get his dog after him and that if Brandon did get his dog after him he would kill him, Brandon, or his Dog? Saw Bob and Gain in Windsor who mentioned they had made a good deal of money handle it foolishly but would hear after take more care of it. Heard Major Clark's Peters say the Negroes were killing the white people by the light of candles, but blamed them the Negroes for it.

The examination of Isaac (belonging to the Estate of David Forner deceased) who being duly cautioned declares that on the Sunday before the last he was at Windsor and saw Gain (belonging in to Mrs. Anne Turner) when in conversation with Gain said he wanted some powder and that he must apply to James Wallace that the other store keepers would not sell it to him did not say what he wanted with the Powder nor whether he got it. Gain has a concourse of Negroes about him suppose the wish to him for advice about the manner of rising. He saw Mr. dungan's Jim buy

62. According to the [Raleigh Register](#) for June 22d, a slave named Frank who had been found guilty of conspiring had been hanged, while another had been “cropped, branded, and whipped,” a third had been “cropped and whipped,” and “the reminder [*sic*] whipped.”



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a pound of Powder at J. Wallace aforesaid and Mr. Dungan's saw [him] buy a pound of powder at same place – knows that his Haiss Arthur's Bob had Powder about two years ago of a Roanoke Boat Heard Bob, (belonging to David Horne) Hereafter that if finally Brandon did fetch dog after him or touch him he would kill (that he had as [unclear] kill him as a raccoon-would kill him and throw him away has second him make his threat three different times – did not suppose he meant to put his treats into execution – Has in conversation with Bob, (belonging to Mr. Jonathan Handley) heard him, Bob, say that he had a given and asked different to get him some powder.

That on the night on which despondent made died rode up Mr. Jaycook's Ferry with Mr. Clement's Robin that Robin told Despondent the Negroes were to rise and kill their white people. They were to leave a meeting at Mr. George Outlaw junior's old field – that he Robin [unclear] the white people had caught him and whipped him at Mr. Daniels he would join them – that if there had not been too many together when they whipped him. Gain leader (belonging to Mrs. Anne Turner) Gain waited to buy some gun powder. Later that year buying a gun and some powder. The Negroes wanted to rise and kill white people; he would have some of their brains out. That him Outlaw Tony, Mr. Taylor Ports, Mr. Dyuyer's Plato, David Horne's Bob, Mr. James Jordan, little Jack, Mr. David Turner's Emanuel, Jim L. Despondent himself, Mr. Dongan's Jim and Sam Major Frances Pugh's Lohil, Ambrose and Jim, Mr. Grays' Dick, Miss. Lenon's Sophie, Peter and Andréa, Mr. Handley, Bob, Mr. Outlaw's Jim, Oliver or Sutton Harry, Mr. Purdy, Bill Mr. turner's Gain, Mr. Haiss Arthur, Lewis and George, Captain Mr. Caufon Eli, Mr. John Clarks Peter, Malache Oliver's Bob and Mr. Clemens Lt Robin all informed they were to meet to join to rise against the white people – Mr. Grays Dick also informed Despondent that Mr. Gray's Jack was to join.

They were to kill all the white people to burn houses and blow them up. Kill the people and so all they could to furnish themselves with arms from those who were first killed.

Emanuel said he had a Gun hid at James Gifford's; her outlaws Tony said he a Livord. Wm Dwyer's Plato said that the Negroes were too much stronger than the white people that one black would be a match for two or three whites. That the whites would get nothing of the Negroes.

The examination of Bob belonging to William Green, being duly cautioned declared that he knows nothing of the subject

The examination of Jack belonging to William Artibeen who being duly cautioned declares that about two years ago he heard Bob (belonging to David Stone that he understood there would be a war between the Negroes and White people knows nothing more.

The examination of Peter (belonging to Charles Jaycook), who being duly cautioned declares he knows nothing about the briefings.

The examination of George belonging to James Clark, who being duly cautioned declares he has no knowledge of the case.

The examination of London (belonging to Miss Martha Bryant, who being duly cautioned declares he has no knowledge of the subject. The examination of Bob (belonging to Capt. Jonathan Handle, who saith he knows nothing of the affairs denies all connection with it.

The examination of Adam (belonging to Mr. James turner, who being duly cautioned saith he knows nothing concerning the



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matter.

The examination of Jack, called little Jack, belonging to Mr. James Jordan, he denies all knowledge of or connection with the conspiracy.

The examination of Bill, (belonging to Mr. Purdy), having any knowledge of or connection with a conspiracy of any kind.

The examination of Sam, (belonging to Mrs. Dangan), he denies all knowledge of any connection with a conspiracy – says he got the powder of Mr. Wallis – but got it by order of his mistress for her.

The examination of Ellis belonging to Captain John McGlaution) denies any knowledge of or connection with the conspiracy.

The examination of Jim, belonging to the Estate of David Turner deceased, he denies having any knowledge of or connection with the conspiracy – he heard last Monday evening from a Negroe boy of his mistress which boy said old woman about the house informed him-there was to be a meeting at Mr. George Outlaw's old field tomorrow evening to concert a plan that they would rise up and kill the whites at Windsor first, get into the houses and kill the people as they come out of the houses – understood that Mrs. Turner's Gain was the head man in calling the meeting.

The examination of Sas, (belonging to Joseph Limon,) he denies having any knowledge of connection with the conspiracy.

The examination of Gain, belonging to Miss Anne Turner, he denies having any knowledge of or concern with the conspiracy.

The examination Torry (belonging to Mrs. Dragen), he denies having any knowledge of or connection with the conspiracy.

The examination of Stephen (belonging to Thomas Veal), he denies having any knowledge of or concern with the conspiracy.

The examination of Lohie (belonging to Major Frances Pugh), he denies having any knowledge of or concern in the conspiracy.

The examination of Major Francis Pugh's Jim – knows nothing.

The examination of Mr. Pollock Manuel knows nothing.

The examination of Mr. Ruffin's Peter knows nothing.

The examination of Charles king, Lemon Charles knows nothing.

The widow Rhodes' Ben declares that he knows nothing [writing on the document]

Examination of Zeno No. 1 the property of Elizabeth Brimage the younger respecting to support conspiracy among the Negroes taken by Warden the 9th of June 1802 after being cautioned. Ganzy and Peter told him he heard the Negroes had risen down the county but did not hear anything more only from whites –

No.2

Charleston the property of Anthony Drake died – heard from O'Malley's Negro that the port rider Mr. Treadwell's Negro man that of the rising, heard of one other Negroe the property of James Turner knows nothing.

No.3

Aaron Miguel himself says Jiles say that if any white man snide him he would kill him (place him in irons) Timothy Miguel the same as Aaron Miguel. Bananas Curry says Jiles told him to go to hell.

No.4

Virginia the property of Mr. Assi Darga says Bob/Dr. Dargert/



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said the Black people always back _____ about rising down at Pasquotank ____ Col. Pugh's Sam told him he heard the Negroes about Windsor were about to rise. Sam told him on Monday he met with Mr. James (as he came from Mr. Simon's), who [crossed out] him the Negroes and Indians were rising against the Whites.

No.5

-Bob Mr. Lennon - Scipio Mr. Linnon told him then was to a night meeting at Mr. Outlaw field on Monday night last by Virginia. There were all the meeting hand was to be given when they were to kill the White people Mr. Turner's Gain was head man and Mr. Stone's Bob was next head man and André Mr. [unclear] was next head man, Mr. Hare's Arthur next head man [unclear] Bob had the powder in a log a horn full and a sword made of a scythe and had a gun at his master house Scripio Mr. Bossman told him gave Virginia. Hear to hold night meeting on Monday nights. They were to kill the White men and do Negro woman and take White women for wives and the yard Negro girls for waiters this conversation happened Sunday evening at Mr. Busman.

No.6

Charles (Mr. Pollock)

No.7

Robbins (Mr. Pollock)

No.8

Emanuel's David Turner died about a month ago on Sunday at a meeting at under Bruiches [crossed out] Mr. Turner's Gain told him he wanted to get all the Negroes he could in coming Thursday night near the race Grand to begin at Mr. Ortiz and fire his barn and the house in Windsor those who had guns were to kill the whites who had guns and after having guns the[y] were to take a batter and white men were to find ammunition information to give at the field - after killing the whites sufficiently, they to have their freedom and it was to begin a day sooner at Condenter they Mr. Clemons Robbins told Gain to - Gain was to be General, Mr. Stone's Bob next to Gain - Mr. Standup's Bob next man- Atewood - Mr. Lenno's - Lumbo Mr. Outlaw, who has a gun which he saw in the woods at the swamp near James Williford they had to hide it between the bank and longs in this house of McClemoln's Robbins - Mr. Durgan's Sae and Innis Mr. Harris Frank. Iniobe Arthur and Lewis Mr. Dinous Bob - Mr. Dwyer's Plato Mr. Gray Dick Mr. Garp's Tobey - Mr. Stone's Bob said he would kill Timothy's Brandon also Mr. Stand Bob would also kill him Gain told him to kill 1 or 2 of family Mr. Arthur Tony - Gain told him a secret and that he would helped [original document torn and damage and cannot be read] Isaac Mr. turner told him Jino was in the plot - Gain was to collect all the Negroes he could between then and the time.

No.9

Lear/ M Cherry/

No.10

Jack ((Mr. Gray) on Sunday last Mr. Harris Incosh? to Mr. Andrews

No.11



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Rpffom/Mr. Clements? Mr. Outlaw those told him he said 15 Negros taken up for rising he told him it was foolish in them.

No.12

Bob (Mr. Stone's) Mr. Newberry Andrew told him he had power [rest of transcript not readable]

No.13

George (Mr. Outlaw)

No.14

Examination of a Negro Wolman the property of Sam Johnston she says that she learned of the affair. Oroficity told her last Sunday night that there was Negroes in Winton Jake she asked this Sam who was the husband what they was from in for he asked for Daring murder she answered to him do not lay hand on your Martin, he then asked her if she would not, she made no answer, he hurried her and said God Dam her, she abreacted to him. If he did not mind himself he would git shot through his jacket, he said to her that the Negroes had killed a White man and Martin shot him as he opened the door, she said that through Hart I wish they warn all killed or burned. [Rest unclear]

Examination of Harry the property of Mr. Outlaw, he says that Mr. Layette's Sam some time ago come over to Mr. Outlaw and told this Harry that them guns we heard was in Virginia and that the Negroes was their fighting the White people about two weeks after the same come over again, and said that Mr. Gwerte's Negroes was going to rise and that Capt. West had taken up 9 Negroes of his and denied it, but the head man confessed it and that - Capt West cut off the leader of them head. Mr. Barco come riding by the fence of Mr. Outlaw yesterday with a gun. Danice the property of Mr. Outlaw said that the white people would with their guns they are so afraid of the Negroes, Harry observed to him he would ride with his gun to Edmond the property of Luke Walton deceased, said they had better not interrupt him for if that they did he would soon leave Casher neck that he was as good a man as any of them he was asked where he was a going to for your master can for no friend to you, he said there is many a one as good as these masters.

The examination of Lewis the property of Edward Hace knows nothing only what he heard his own say.

The examination of Ben the property of Jess Baymore knows nothing.

Deposition of Gumbo the property of David Outlaw knows nothing.

Deposition of Sam the property of Samuel Johnston the last day of May asked Dae come in the field the property of Ruben Thompson and heard him and told him stop a little when he came up say I am very tired and weary I asked him what was the occasion, he replied, Dam White people pillaged him so bad they aught all to be killed and shall I say yes if I can get a great many to join me which I will try to do and them I will let you all know I have a gun and some powder I will tag and get all the guns and powder that I can, and if that would not do will try clubs and [unclear] want do will try lay stuff at the door. He further



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says that he met Jim the property of Col. Pugh he said he and his overseer had face out. Dam him he and all the rest ought to be killed. He further sayeth that James peter he saw some time after and he told him that his overseer had been whipping two of the Negroes. Boyle the property of Mr. Taylor said Dame the overseer he ought to be killed and all the rest of George of the [unclear] property come up and asked what that was he said, he repeated it over and George said yes they ought, he further saith that at a sermon at Mr. Hinton's he heard a Negro Charles the property of Harry Johnston say after the sermon that there was a great many white people her. Dam them they pestered him so about Mr. Pugh's that ought to be killed and should be killed they all ought to be.

Deposition Jim the property of Col. Thomas Ought. Nothing

Deposition Dumprey the property of Abnia Eason. Nothing

Examination of a negro woman Nan the property of David Turner deceased, she sayeth some time ago Mr. Ian Stanley Bob came into her house later at night and told her that Mr. Brandon Dog had run him off in the middle part of the night, he said he had cut him a stick and after she told him he had better go away that Mr. Brandon would come and catch him, he said that if he did he would kill him if he could not get clear,

Morris (Mr. Ponce) knows nothing except from whites.

George (Mr. Veal)

Ambrose Mr. Pugh says downhill told him bitter [*sic*] informed him of the rising and always, afterward heard of whites.

Peter/Mr. John Clark/ he had liberty of his quarters to go to Mr. Skiles to get — Brecker, Meg and of his [unclear] the swamp had some talk with him and looked at his gun and turn and met another Sam and was informed by him of his further not having another brake toward win toward his master said Mr. [name missing] and another man shooting killed dares was called and heard [section unclear] when to his old Misses to get a pass and when to his Misses heard nothing of negros respecting the conspiracy

Harry Mr. Ruffin/ knows nothing only of his master.

Isaac/ Mr. J. Turner/ knows nothing only of a white woman.

Torry/Mr. Taylor/ knows nothing only heard his [unclear] take master say some time passing day the negros were rising away back, Scipio/Mr. Lennon's/ he came in town Saturday after and asked. Testimony broken in parts, but its essentials is that the Negroes were planning to rise and he told there it was wrong for Negros to rise [because] they would be killed and that it would be better if they ran away and get free this way — does not recalled of setting with any Negroe at Capt. Bosman on last and had no conversation with any negro this day.

Scipio/Mr. Pollock/ he heard of this rising from old John down at [unclear] he met with Mr.? Cupichats at Dimpry Baker who told him he had an old gun. He offered to bring it to Cape hand and Baker and would sell it to him. He wanted the gun to kill Turkeys — Baker said he would give any among for the gun as this was enough to help pay for him.

Simon/Mr. Bageman/ when runaway was a women of Mr. hunter was also at Gates {unclear] fish for the same meeting in gates with James Parnell who told him of the negroes rising in Portsmouth, was told by Sarah Boon a free woman there was good guns a good change of David collier when they went to meeting. Sarah Boon a free Black woman heard him say he wanted to get a gun from a



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poor white people along there he was willing [unclear] to except a gun that old Duke Meary D. gotten had was a good one of his old mistress [unclear] someone attempting to purchase a gun that works. Discuss Negroes rising in Virginia, who were being taken to goals. Hand washed children cloths and was afraid someone would take them had to get back. During preaching camp saw several Negroes in the road talking [unclear] Gain. Mr. turner was with them Mr. Bucess Charles was with them they were talking low – while at preaching and saw a number of negroes sturdy talking too and away from the sermon.

EXAMINATION EXAMINATION EXAMINATION EXAMINATION
Examination of several Negro slaves respecting a conspiracy and taken at Windsor 14 June 1802 before Mr. William [line unclear]
Fred/Motifs/ he went to his wife house on Tuesday night at [unclear] Davison and Mr. Frank, Mr. summers, between John Davidson and James Torrils on the road he gave him a letter to bring to Capt. King Brown – he told him to give it to King – the 10 June they were a going to make a thank and come down to the Ferry and plunge and destroy and then come to Mr. Hunter store and break open it and take powder there and come to master first he allowed he was a bad man [This section of court document us unclear] but seems concern that master was a man who whipped people to death. Apparently, there was a letter written by a slave detailing the plan to rise. Slave was supposed to deliver letter to mother, girl runaway and stayed away until the whites came home and gave the letter to whites instead of her mother. He [person not identified] asked him and he denied it and he went to the justice and asked for the truth and told them. Brigg John, Mr. Blants asked him to join to rise and take the White folks and told him he did not know if it would do or not. Dick a low fellow at Edenton asked him if he would join and take the Whites and [he] gave no answer satisfactory.
Frank said he was full strong to carry to Art King Brown the letter he would know what to do with it – David and Dennis talked in the field and said they would rise and have no hand in the burning this conversation happened in the field since fishing and on a Monday or Tuesday – on a Saturday he saw Capt. King Brown at Mr. Bronens finishing as he and David Musty was going after Mr. Fluorite Sawyers and spoke to him among the other Negroes as he there down for only common conversation.
Simon, Mr. Hunter he went to Mr. Brown one night Thursday after the 20 day of May and while he was there King Mr. Brown told him he had a letter from Frank Sumner to get all the men he could together to rise against the white people he said the word was all that don't join are to be killed he insisted on him to join him agreed if all would be killed he may be freely or would have it done – that if or he be killed that he had an order from Frank to get the men he could in order – until further orders that then who did not join should not live among them they be killed – that all up the river were joined and ready Frank informed him. About half an hour, Dennis (another of the fellow) came in and said they now have it in any- to himself them who kept him to long in the rope and for particularly to revenge himself on those who kept him tied so long already to a time when he Dennis had been take up about – farm goods. That he meant to join Dave Thorface in rising against them white people and would if he did



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no more punish them that kept him tied so long and finished him. Dave said when Brown fellow Boron was to be a Major – her Drew Moornes Bob to be a fifties and our Gangery who lives over Chowan and belongs to Mr. Larry – Dave Mistress also told her the plan had been agreed upon during the Fishing—The letter found with Difonent [dependent] was left with her the week before last by Fred who lives at Mr. Feats Difonent [despondent] for the letter in – and of Cotton and—to come that night the letter was that night found – Fred faced Frank and gave it to him. Taken before us a Windsor 15th 1802 before us David—.

The examination of Judi a negroe woman—belonging to Mr. Les Ray [space] buy duly cautioned the Jays that – him about and weeks ago Mr. Fetts Dave Murfrey came to her house one night after the white people had gone to bed and began to laugh and talk and said there is Hell fire news. What is it? We black are going to rise against them white we would do this and form a nation to come with powder of that would furnaces. Kill them white men and the ugly white women and we will take the handsome wh9ite woman for wives. We will make slaves of the negroe woman – told her that our [unclear] Who being with Reverend Reed was to furnish powder and if the powder he gave should be before the—come to give them money to buy more—to make the attack at the meeting which is to be held Friday, Saturday, Sunday or on the Sunday of it when there would be the most people to hide themselves in the woods and attack the people after they were collected to take as many as they could then kill them with the Buttes of their Muskets threatened the Witness that if he should be killed if she told – after Dave had been in the Court order that Tony the property of George Outlaw Junior receive three lashes – He laid on his bare back under the gallows and that he be committed to the Goal of the county. Contact his mother or family other person for him enter into an obligation with the Clerk to the State in the loan of 250 to be void only on condition that the said Tony – be transported or carried immediately out of the State of North Carolina and not again to be transferred to – or go at large within the State.

Isaac the property of the Estate of David Turner having repeatedly conferred that he was one of the conspirators against the white people and having also acknowledged that he took an active part in procuring others to join in the conspiracy the Court order and a judge that he said Isaac be committed to the Goal of the County for the sum of one year or until the – who has the charge of him as Representative of the Estate of his makes that enter into an obligation to the State of north Carolina in the Sum of 250 to be void only upon the condition that he then said Isaac Shall be transported or carried immediately out of the State of north Carolina and not again suffered to return or go at large within the State.

State of North Carolina – At a court of the justices of the County Bertie County of Bertie aforesaid specifically convinced at Windsor on the 30th day of June 1802 for the lunch of certain negroe slaves by the Sheriffs of the said bounty by vertices of the of Assembly for that purpose made from all we present. The worshipped George Aulleuo, David Somo and Joseph Eason – Esquires Justices. Ordered that Sam the property of Samuel Johnston receive thirty-nine lashes on his bare back under the



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Gallows and that he be committed to the Goal of the County until his master or some other person from him – an able Galion of the State of north Carolina in the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds to be void only upon condition that he then said [sentence unclear] out of the State of North Carolina and not against suffered to return or go at large within the State.

State of North Carolina

Negro all men by these presents that we Samuel Johnston & Edward Manning arch8i – and familiarly bound unto the State of North Carolina in the full and just sum of Two Hundred and Fifty pounds to which payment will truly to turn a – we find ourselves our hurt Executor Admitting traitors jointly severally firmly by these presented Sealed with our Seals and Date this 30th day June 1802.

The condition of the above able Galion is such that if the above – so Samuel Johnston shall liable transport or carry his Negroe man slave named Sam out of the State of North Carolina and riot again suffer him to return or go at large within the State aforesaid than this obligation to be void otherwise to regain in full force a –

Signed Sealed and Delivered

in presence of George Gray

Sam W. Johnston (SEAL)

E. Manning (SEAL)

State of North Carolina

Know all men by these Presents that we Francis Pugh and George Gray are held and firmly-unto those we Pugh, David Stone and Leher Nicholas Esq. and the rest of the Justices assigns to keep the beau for the county of Bertie in the full and just sum of Two Hundred and fifty Pounds to the which payment will and truly be made we being ourselves our heirs esq. Adams jointly and – firmly by these present-with our seats this 26th the June 1802. The conditions of the obligation is such that if the Said Francis Pugh shall immediately transport and carry out of the State of North Carolina the Slave dick and not again suffer him to return or go at large within the State aforesaid, these this obligation to be read otherwise to remain in full force and affect.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered in Presence of George Gray

Francis Pugh (SEAL)

John McGlaugh (SEAL)

State of North Carolina

Know all men by these Presents that we Morgan Autterush, George Autterush Archibald firmly bound to the State of North Carolina in the full and Just Sum of Two Hundred Fifty pounds to that which payment will and surely to be made we find ourselves occurred Executions-jointly and severely firmly by these presented Sealed with our Seals and dated this 11th day of August 1802.

The Condition of the above obligation is such that if the above bounds Morgan Autterush shall immediately transport or carry his Negro man slave named Toney Gorsmerty belonging to George Auttaco Seen and if now in Goal out of the State of North Carolina and not again suffer him to return or go at large within the State aforesaid then the obligation to be v void otherwise to remain in full forces and effect.

Signed, Sealed and delivered in presence of

George Gray



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Morgan Autt rush (SEAL)

George Autt errush (SEAL)

We whose names and hereto subscribed do engage to contribute according to the proportion after mentioned to make payment for the Slaves who have lately been executed at Windson – that is to say the Negroes executed that be valued by ferrous indifferently chosen the Negroes belonging to us respectively that also be valued and we whose Negroes are discharged with contribute—. To the values of those belonging to us respectively to make payment to those whole Negroes have been executed loosing in proportion to the respective values – our hands this 15th June 1802.

The above is in the hand writing of David Honely.

O David! David! How you misled the people to pay you for Bob. Let the justices who condemned the Negroes without giving them a legal trial pay the damage – were you one or not?

State of North Carolina

August Firm 1805

Bertie County

Ordered that Solomon Cherry sheriff be allowed Sixty Seven pounds Ten Shillings for the hire of men to guard the goal in the time of the Insurrection in June 1802.

George Grau

State of North Carolina August to Firm 1802

Bertie County. It was on device that—below one hundred twenty six pounds for feeding the – ten – on the—



September 24, Friday: John Barnes of Georgetown wrote to [Thomas Jefferson](#) at Monticello that the “uprising of Negroes in [Washington](#) has subsided.”

SERVILE INSURRECTION



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1803



End of August: The city of Richmond, Virginia was stormed by a number of **enslaved** persons seeking their freedom. They came dangerously close to actually seizing control of that city — and, had they succeeded, it goes without question that the usual casual injustice and shameless cruelty of that city would have been superseded by another, more unusual, regime of injustice and shameless cruelty.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1804


William Earle, Junior's OBI; OR, THE HISTORY OF **THREEFINGERED JACK**. IN A SERIES OF LETTERS FROM A RESIDENT IN JAMAICA TO HIS FRIEND IN ENGLAND (Worcester: Printed by Isaiah Thomas, Jun. Sold by him, and by Thomas & Whipple, Newburyport).

[SERVILE INSURRECTION](#)[RACE SLAVERY](#)**THREEFINGERED JACK**

SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1805

 The Legislature of Virginia having been meeting for five years in secret session to figure out how to get rid of free people of color, convicts, and other persons who might be tempted to take part in a general [servile insurrection](#), prohibited any further emancipation of [slaves](#) except on the condition that the [emancipated](#) persons should immediately depart from Virginia. If any emancipated person should be found lingering within the state for more than one year, they were to be auctioned back into slavery by the overseers of the poor and the proceeds of their auctioning would contribute to the enlargement of the Literary Fund.


An early attempt to curtail [slavery](#) in our national capitol failed when the federal Congress defeated a resolution to achieve gradual emancipation in the [District of Columbia](#) through [emancipating](#) enslaved children as they reached their maturity.



"It is simply crazy that there should ever have come into being a world with such a sin in it, in which a man is set apart because of his color — the superficial fact about a human being. Who could **want** such a world? For an American fighting for his love of country, that the last hope of earth should from its beginning have swallowed [slavery](#), is an irony so withering, a justice so intimate in its rebuke of pride, as to measure only with God."



— Stanley Cavell, MUST WE MEAN WHAT WE SAY?
1976, page 141

 January 22, Tuesday: [Nicolò Paganini](#) renewed his contract with Cappella Nazionale del Potere Esecutivo, [Lucca](#).

Henry Clay signed a contract with John Fisher for the construction of a mansion for his family at Ashland near Lexington, Kentucky.

It was such a relatively warm day at the winter camp of the Lewis and Clark expedition, that they occupied themselves in attempting to chop their boat free of the ice — so that it might be more securely stored.

The General Assembly of Virginia was still struggling with what it considered to be the state's major problem —free blacks— and was in its 5th year of secret session when it arrived at the following secret resolution:

Resolved, That the Senators of this State in the Congress of the United States be instructed, and the Representatives be requested, to exert their best efforts for the obtaining from the General Government a competent portion of territory in the country of Louisiana, to be appropriated to the residence of such people of color as have been, or shall be, [emancipated](#), or may hereafter become dangerous to the public safety....

[SERVILE INSURRECTION](#)



Another noticeable fact ... is the state of fearful insecurity in which the residents of a slaveholding community must feel that they are living. The late assertion of Gov. Wise, that "We, the Virginians, are in no danger from our slaves or the colored people," — or that of Senator Mason, "We can take care of ourselves," — or that of Miles, of South Carolina, "We are



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

impregnable," — betrays the depth and extent of their fear by the very attempt to conceal it; like timid boys "ejaculating through white lips and chattering teeth," *Who's afraid?* In the wide-spread panic of 1800, the slaveholders appear to have been excessively puzzled to ascertain what could have induced their slaves to engage in such a conspiracy. They, of course, could not have originated such a plot, and had been, in their opinion, so well-treated that *they* could have no motive to wish for their freedom. It was at first rumored that Gabriel had in his possession letters written by white men; then, that the conspiracy of the negroes was "occasioned by the circulation of some artfully written hand-bills, drawn up by the noted Callender in prison, and circulated by two French people of color from Guadaloupe, aided by a United Irish pretended Methodist preacher"; then, "that the instigators of the diabolical plan wished thereby to insure the elections of Adams and Pinckney, and that the blacks, as far as they were capable, reasoned on the Jeffersonian principles of emancipation." They were, at last, unwillingly compelled to believe that the whole plot originated with slaves, and was confined to them exclusively, and that, like all other human beings, deprived by arbitrary power of all their just rights, they were determined to be free.

**THE TASK OF THE HISTORIAN IS TO CREATE HINDSIGHT WHILE
INTERCEPTING ANY ILLUSION OF FORESIGHT. NOTHING A HUMAN CAN
SEE CAN EVER BE SEEN AS IF THROUGH THE EYE OF GOD.
IN A BOOK THAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE ABOUT HISTORY, ISSUED BY
RANDOM HOUSE IN 2016, I FIND THE PHRASE "LOOKED UPON FROM
THE BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF HISTORY," ONLY A MERE STORYTELLER,
NEVER A HISTORIAN, COULD HAVE PENNED SUCH A PHRASE —
BECAUSE NO BIRD HAS EVER FLOWN OVER HISTORY.**



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1811



January 8, Tuesday-10, Thursday: In what has been the largest slave revolt in the United States, Louisiana [slaves](#) revolted in two parishes. The leader of the revolt was [Charles Deslondes](#), a buggy driver from St. Domingue, property of the widow Deslondes. At a plantation about 35 miles from New Orleans the Andry family and their overseers were attacked, killing Mr. Andry's son Gilbert Thomassin Andry and putting the family to flight. The servile insurrectionaries were able to supplement their hoes, machetes, and clubs with a few firearms and some ammunition and set out downriver. At another plantation, Jean Francois Trepagnier was killed. The slave army by day's end had gotten almost 25 miles in the direction of the city by the time the wounded Mr. Andry returned with a local militia of some 80 white men. Communication had been made to Claiborne and US troops were approaching, under the command of General Wade Hampton. Troops from Baton Rouge were also approaching. The slaves were immediately overwhelmed by this firepower. Those who hadn't simply been shot down, including Deslondes and his leaders, were summarily executed and decapitated, and 45 heads were mounted on pikes. At the Destrehan Plantation, there were quick trials in which 21 of some 30 accused were found guilty and immediately executed, and their heads added to the long row of pikes along the levees.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

3rd day 8 of 1 Mo// The usual rounds of the day. Rote in the eveng a letter to David Smith of Bolton -


RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS




SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1816

 A [slave](#) uprising in Barbados incurred brutal retaliation.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

 June: When various slaves in Camden, South Carolina conspired for [servile insurrection](#), they were betrayed to Colonel Chestnut by his “favorite and confidential slave.”

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: We find in the planting colonies all degrees of advocacy of the trade, from the passiveness of Maryland to the clamor of Georgia. Opposition to the trade did not appear in Georgia, was based almost solely on political fear of insurrection in Carolina, and sprang largely from the same motive in Virginia, mingled with some moral repugnance. As a whole, it may be said that whatever opposition to the slave-trade there was in the planting colonies was based principally on the political fear of insurrection.



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1817



January 24, Friday: [Lieutenant Francis Hall](#) arrived at Charleston, South Carolina, where he would be either horrified or amused (you can take your pick) by the sophistry of the arguments presented to him by local white men in defense of black servitude (“it is necessary”; “it is for the best”; “this is the real world”; “it is for the good of the negroes”; “they tell me they appreciate it”; “it is superior to any other real possibility”; plus every other analysis with the solitary exception of “this arrangement of affairs sure is making life pleasant for me as a white man”).

At this point Friend [Paul Cuffe](#), persuaded that American blacks would never be allowed to be full citizens, was hoping that they might fare better back in Africa, farther away from white prejudice. As a merchant he of course had an interest in nurturing trade between Africa and black American businessmen. He was intrigued by the idea of converting Africa to Christianity. In 1810 and 1811 he had sailed to Sierra Leone, a British colony that had been functioning as a haven for poor blacks from London, and for the black Loyalists of Nova Scotia who despaired of ever being allowed to succeed there. In 1815 and 1816 he had made a successful voyage to Sierra Leone with 38 colonists from the United States. In 1816 Robert Finley had contacted him in regard to plans to form an American Colonization Society and Cuffe had greeted the idea with enthusiasm. Soon the new ACS had contacted James Forten, a black businessman with a sailmaking business in Philadelphia, to recruit colonists from the vicinity of Philadelphia. Prominent Americans such as Henry Clay, John Randolph of Roanoke, and Justice Bushrod Washington were members of the American Colonization Society during its early years. Many free African-Americans, however, including those who had supported Paul Cuffe’s efforts, were wary of this new organization. They were concerned that it was dominated by Southerners and slave holders and that it excluded blacks from membership. Most free African-Americans of course would prefer to remain in the land which had been the context of their lives all their lives. Forten and Cuffe were close friends and Forten often looked after Cuffe’s Philadelphia business interests. He was a supporter of Cuffe’s colonization schemes, and the two men had corresponded on this topic. On January 15, 1817, Forten and other black leaders had called a meeting at Bethel to discuss the ACS and the idea of colonization and the church had been packed by almost 3,000 black men. After the Reverends [Richard Allen](#), Absalom Jones, and John Gloucester spoke in favor of immigrating to Africa, Forten called for those in favor to say “yea,” but there was not a single “yea” from the assembled men. The “no,” however, seemed “as it would bring down the walls of the building.” Forten wrote to Cuffe on January 25, “there was not one sole [sic] that was in favor of going to Africa.” The common people were well aware that the covert agenda of this new organization was 1.) to rid this nation of its strongest opponents to [slavery](#), the free blacks and 2.) to ease the white people’s fear of [servile insurrection](#). Forten described this awareness to Cuffe as “They think that the slave holders wants to get rid of them so as to make their property more secure.” Instead, the assembly voted a series of unanimous resolutions. “Whereas our ancestors (not of choice) were the first cultivators of the wilds of America, we their descendents feel ourselves entitled to participate in the blessings of her luxuriant soil.... Resolved, That we never will separate ourselves voluntarily from the slave population in this country; they are our brethren by the ties of consanguinity, of suffering, and of wrongs....” A committee of twelve formed in opposition to the covert agenda of the ACS, and James Forten became chairman. The Reverends [Richard Allen](#), Absalom Jones, and John Gloucester, who had been so caught off guard by the unanimous opposition of the majority, were in this committee. Some of them, especially James Forten, privately believed that colonization was a workable idea, but were willing to unite with the majority in opposing the ACS. At a meeting of a respectable portion of the free people of color of the city of Richmond, on Friday, January 24, 1817, William Bowler was appointed chairman, and Lentey Craw secretary. A preamble and resolution were unanimously adopted and ordered to be printed: “Whereas a Society has been formed at the seat of government, for the purpose of colonizing, with their own consent, the free people of color of the United States; therefore, we, the free people of color of the city of Richmond, have thought it advisable to assemble together under the sanction of authority, for the purpose of making a public expression of our sentiments on a question in which we are so deeply interested. We perfectly agree with the Society, that it is not only proper,



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

but would ultimately tend to the benefit and advantage of a great portion of our suffering fellow creatures, to be colonized; but while we thus express our approbation of a measure laudable in its purposes, and beneficial in its designs, it may not be improper in us to say, that we prefer being colonized in the most remote corner of the land of our nativity, to being exiled to a foreign country — and whereas the president and board of managers of the said Society have been pleased to leave it to the entire discretion of Congress to provide a suitable place for carrying these laudable intentions into effect — Be it therefore Resolved, That we respectfully submit to the wisdom of Congress whether it would not be an act of charity to grant us a small portion of their territory, either on the Missouri river, or any place that may seem to them most conducive to the public good and our future welfare, subject, however, to such rules and regulations as the government of the United States may think proper to adopt.”



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1821



October 24, Wednesday: According to an article in the Caledonian Mercury of Edinburgh, Scotland for December 6th, on October 24th the army of the United Kingdom had placed a number of its officers on half-pay. Among those were the officers of the 37th Regiment of Foot: "Captain J. Thoreau; Lieutenant C. Vincent; Ensign Hon. A.C.J. Brown."

CAPTAIN JOHN THOREAU

Thomas Jefferson's proposal for a revision of the laws of Virginia was approved. This self-described "author of the Declaration of Independence" had an understanding of race "treason" that would create a "treason" law of aiding and abetting a servile insurrection, which after several revisions would become the deadly Virginia "treason" statute under which Captain John Brown would be hanged:

On the subject of the Criminal law, all were agreed that the punishment of death should be abolished, except for treason and murder; and that, for other felonies should be substituted hard labor in the public works, and in some cases, the Lex talionis. How this last revolting principle came to obtain our approbation, I do not remember. There remained indeed in our laws a vestige of it in a single case of a slave. it was the English law in the time of the Anglo-Saxons, copied probably from the Hebrew law of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," and it was the law of several antient people. But the modern mind had left it far in the rear of its advances.





SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1822



May 30, Thursday: Peter Prioleau, a mulatto house slave, betrayed the [Denmark Vesey](#) conspiracy, allegedly one of the most elaborate slave plots on record, involving thousands of blacks in [Charleston](#), South Carolina and vicinity. The latest timetable for the action had June 17th as the day on which they were to embark on ships seized in the harbor and set sail toward the promise of freedom in the black republic of Haiti.⁶³ During the ensuing two months, authorities would be arresting 131 persons of color, of whom 37 would hang and 32 be condemned to exile, plus 4 whites, who would be fined and imprisoned.

On May 30th, 1822, a "faithful and confidential slave" disclosed to the Intendant of Charleston, S. C., that, on Sunday evening, June 16th, the slaves had determined to rise in rebellion against the whites, "set fire to the Governor's house, seize the Guard-house and Arsenal, and sweep the town with fire and sword, not permitting a white soul to escape." Of the supposed conspirators, one hundred and thirty-one were committed to prison, thirty-five executed, and thirty-seven banished. Of the six ringleaders, Ned Bennet, Peter Poyas, Rolla, Batteau, Jesse, and Denmark Vesey, all were slaves, except Vesey, who had been a slave thirty-eight years, a free man twenty-two years, having in 1800 purchased his freedom.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

5th day 30th of 5 M / Our first meeting was Silent - In the last there was considerable buisness which went on pretty well, in good Harmony. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

63. President of Haiti Jean-Pierre Boyer had advertised in American gazettes for free black immigrants with tools and skills. On July 1, 1820 [Niles Weekly Register](#) had noted accurately the astonishing fertility of its soil which made the island the garden of the western archipelago (something of which we need to remind ourselves from time to time in the midst of the present's eroded barrenness and general filthiness) and of a structure of law ensuring a free country to Africans and their descendants (that's before US Marines, the Tonton Macoute, and local dictators such as Papa Doc and Baby Doc). There yet remain on the Peninsula of Samaná, enduring these present conditions, some impoverished descendants of those 19th-Century immigrants who elected to linger.

Volume 18, page 326: President Boyer is inviting the free blacks of the United States to emigrate to Hayti, in preference to Africa, promising them protection and assistance. An address to the Haytians on this subject says - "Our past sufferings - our unexampled efforts to regain our primitive rights - our solemn oath to live free and independent - the happy situation on our island, which may be justly called the queen of the Antilles - the astonishing fertility of its soil, which makes it the garden of the western archipelago - the progress of its inhabitants in civilization, and in some of the fine arts; our wise constitution which insures a free country to Africans and their descendants; all lead us to believe that the hand of Providence has destined Hayti for a land of promise, a sacred asylum, where our unfortunate brethren will, in the end, see their wounds healed by the balm of equality, and their tears wiped away by the protecting hand of liberty."

NILES WEEKLY REGISTER

SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION



May 25, Saturday: [Waldo Emerson](#)'s 19th birthday.



An idle conversation occurred on the fish wharf in the harbor of [Charleston](#), South Carolina. William Paul, a black slave, asked Peter Prioleau, a mulatto house slave, whether he was aware that “something serious is about to take place.” Prioleau had not heard of this, so Paul went on then, to explain that “many of us are determined to right ourselves” and that their intent was to “shake off our bondage.” According to AN OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE TRIALS OF SUNDRY NEGROES, CHARGED WITH AN ATTEMPT TO RAISE AN INSURRECTION IN THE STATE OF SOUTH-CAROLINA: PRECEDED BY AN INTRODUCTION AND NARRATIVE; AND IN AN APPENDIX, A REPORT OF THE TRIALS OF FOUR WHITE PERSONS, ON INDICTMENTS FOR ATTEMPTING TO EXCITE THE SLAVES TO INSURRECTION. PREPARED AND PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE COURT. BY LIONEL H. KENNEDY & THOMAS PARKER ... (Charleston, 1822),⁶⁴ Prioleau was so agitated at the thought of this conversation that, a few days later, he would confide in William Penceel, a free mulatto who himself owned fifteen black slaves, and Penceel would advise him that to be safe he needed to inform his owners, John Cordes Prioleau and Marianne Cordes Prioleau, who were wealthy plantation owners. In his master's absence, the slave would confide in his mistress and she would notify the mayor of the municipality. As their reward for this service to white people, revealing the alleged [Denmark Vesey](#) conspiracy, Penceel would receive a cash sum of \$1,000 and Prioleau a cash sum of \$200 (Penceel would receive this higher amount on account of being free and being lighter skinned than Prioleau) and then each would receive a \$50 annuity for life, and in addition, Penceel would be permanently exempted from the Free Negro Tax, and in his subsequent years, Peter Prioleau would be manumitted by Mr. and Mrs. Prioleau after a government payout to them of \$1,200, and would also be entirely exempted from any taxation for life (by 1840 Peter would own seven black slaves).

[SERVILE INSURRECTION](#)

64. The source misidentifies Peter Prioleau as “Devany Prioleau” and William Penceel as “George Pencil.”



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT



July 3, Wednesday: [Charles Babbage](#) published his proposal for a “difference engine” for the mechanical calculation of logarithms and trigonometric functions. Construction of an operational version would proceed under British Government sponsorship from 1823 to 1832 but the enormous geared device would not be completed.

The [Charleston Courier](#) noted recent global and local events:

WEDNESDAY MORNING, JULY 3, 1822.

The Treaty with France, published in this morning's *Courier*, is copied from the *National Intelligencer* of the 28th ult. in which paper it appears both in French and English — but as we have no *accents* amongst our types, it was impossible for us to give it correctly in the French language. In the French copy, the signature of M. HYDE DE NEUVILLE precedes that of Mr. ADAMS.

Execution. — DENMARK VESEY, (a free black man) ROLLA, BATTEAU, NED, PETER, and JESSE, (slaves) convicted of an attempt to raise an insurrection in this state, were executed, pursuant to sentence, yesterday morning, between the hours of 6 and 8 o'clock.

**Officers of the *Charleston Bible Society*, for 1822-3:
Gen. C.C. PINCKNEY, President.
Rev. Dr. FURMAN, Senior Vice-President.**

DENMARK VESEY

HANGING

After this conspiracy, since Vesey had purchased his [manumission](#), South Carolina would extend its prohibition of the manumission of [slaves](#), which had been a protective ordinance applied only to those who were too old, sick, or crippled to any longer care for themselves, effective immediately, into a categorical and total prohibition of any manumission.

SERVILE INSURRECTION



July 22, Monday: The British Parliament enacted one of the 1st animal rights laws, the Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act intended to protect farm animals.

After three months devoted to his music, Gioachino Rossini departed from Vienna because Prince Metternich, a great admirer, has engaged him as the “official composer” for the Verona Conference (coming up in November).

In Heinzendorf in what was then Lower Silesia, [Johann Mendel](#) was born. His father Anton Mendel (1789-1857) was a peasant veteran of the Napoleonic Wars. His mother Rosine née Schwirtlich (1794-1862) had already given birth to three daughters, two of whom had died. The surviving daughter, Veronica, was two years old.

GREGOR MENDEL

The botanist [Stephen Elliott](#) wrote to his nephew [William Elliott](#) about the recent conspiracy by a [Charleston](#)

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SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

Bible teacher, [Denmark “No one thought to describe his face” Vesey](#), to free the [slaves](#) of South Carolina.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

The [Boston](#) house known as the Beehive was a 2-story dwelling with a sharp roof, with its end toward the street. This house was called the Beehive house because it had many little windows, making it look from the outside very like a honeycomb. The lady of the house was a Mrs. Cooper, who had two daughters and many female boarders. On this evening at about 9PM a crowd of about 200 men, attired in various outlandish costumes and with well-blackened faces, carrying various work implements, suddenly came around the corner accompanied by a band. It took them approximately ten minutes to virtually rip this house to shreds. The first thing they did was turn all the featherbeds inside out from the windows so that the neighborhood took on the resemblance of winter. They then proceeded with a will to utterly demolish the furniture, the walls, the roof, the frame, everything about the house, their intent being not to leave any two sticks fastened together or any stick larger than a door hingepin. As they departed they set a fire in some brimstone, feathers, and wool rags — so that the house lot not only seemed like a trash heap, and looked like winter, but smelled like Hell itself. (So, where were the Boston authorities? Elsewhere.)



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1823



There was yet another [servile insurrection](#) to put down, on the island of Jamaica:

1640-1713	seven slave revolts in the islands of the British West Indies
1655	With Jamaica in transition between Spanish control and English control, some 1,500 slaves escaped into the mountains to form maroon communities.
1656	Juan de Bolas led many of the escaped slaves in the maroon communities of the mountains of Jamaica down to the plains and the coast with a deal in which the English granted pardon and freedom. Many maroons, however, would elect to remain in the mountains.
1668	“Lobby’s rebellion” on Jamaica — several hundred black slaves escaped to the mountains.
1725-1740	1st Maroon War on Jamaica
March 1, 1738-1739	The 1st Maroon War on Jamaica ended in a treaty guaranteeing freedom for the maroons, the deal being that henceforward they would capture and turn in for a reward any new slave or bond-laborer escapees.
1760	slave uprising on Jamaica
1776	slave uprising on Jamaica
1784	slave uprising on Jamaica
1795-1796	2d Maroon War on Jamaica
1823	slave uprising on Jamaica
1824	slave uprising on Jamaica
1831	slave uprising on Jamaica

The [Cuban](#) poet José María Heredia and José Francisco Lemus organize a secret society known as “Suns and Rays of Bolívar.” Their society was to plan a rebellion for independence and to seek union with that famed liberator. However, Spain quelled such independence movements in [Cuba](#).

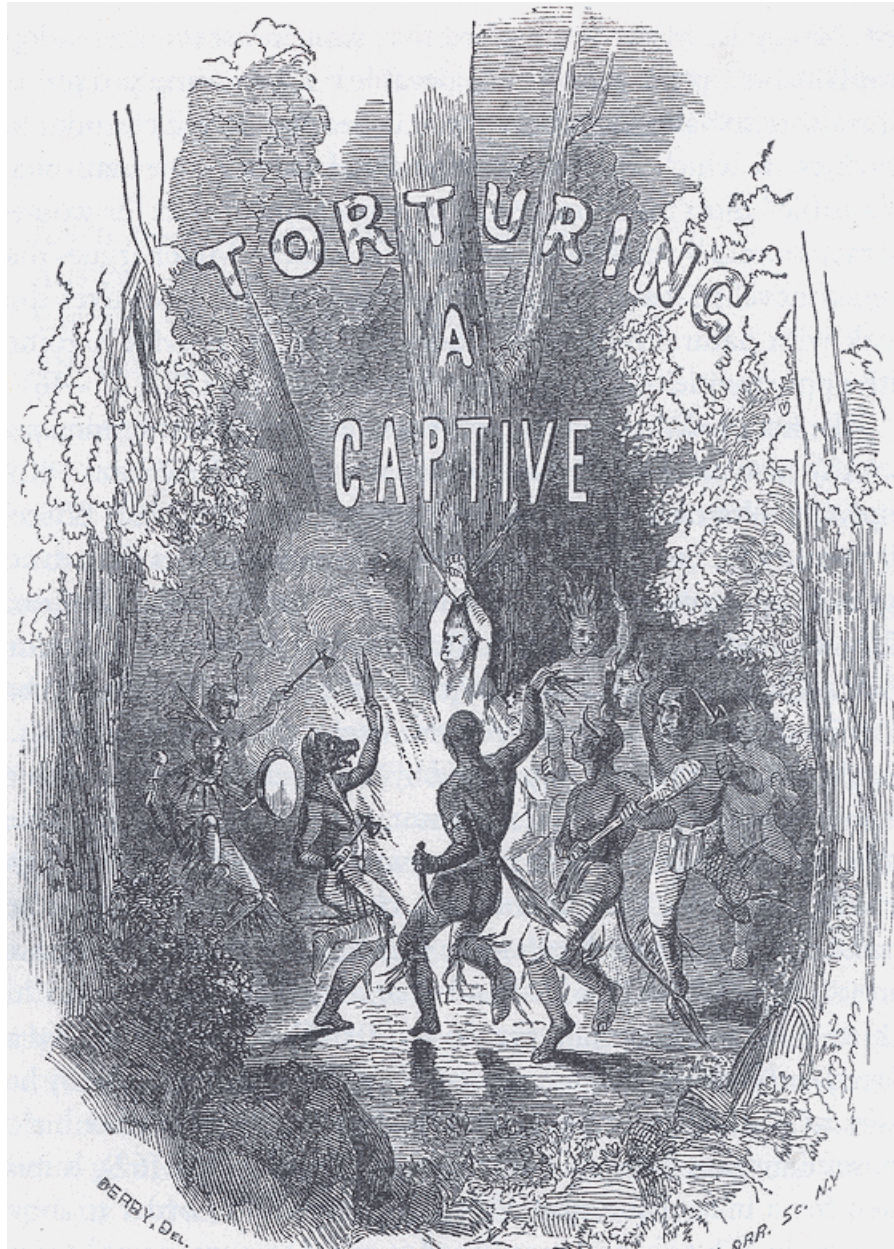
SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1824



May: At Cape Fear, a [slave](#) identified as “Isam” who had been accused of having led [servile insurrections](#) in Bladen County, Carteret County, Jones County, and Onslow County in [North Carolina](#), in August and September of 1821, was publicly tortured to death.



(Of course, the good white people of [North Carolina](#) didn't **say** that was what they were doing, didn't **say** that they were publicly [torturing](#) someone to death: they **called** it something else.

Back then they were calling it something which our historians, imitating them, have ever since allowed it to be called. They had reason, the man “Isam” having been, to them, a mere black and therefore a slave, and therefore a suitable object for them to torture. Our historians, however, have no reason for calling torture something else, something which the torturers called it — unless our historians are even more impoverished

SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

in their thinking than they are in their scribbling, or unless, and I really suspect that this is the case, our historians have inherited the mindset of these torturers to such an extent as to consider such a vicious mindset to be normative objectivity.

Obviously, I am looking forward toward a future day in which we will be able to afford to be polite and christen this sort of historical thingie “Anxiety Management” because we have finally all of us grasped that it was very wrong for us ever to have tortured people, within, that is, the continental bounds of the United States of America.)



December 18, Saturday: [New-York](#) mayor Philip Hone decided to back the [Delaware and Hudson Canal](#).



Supply and demand. During this month a [negrero](#) flying the Spanish flag (as shown below), the *Bella Dolores*, master Guerrero, on its only known [Middle Passage](#), was arriving at its destination port of Havana, [Cuba](#) with an unknown number of fresh [slaves](#) on board.





SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

Yet another [servile insurrection](#) was in this year being put down in Jamaica:

1640-1713	seven slave revolts in the islands of the British West Indies
1655	With Jamaica in transition between Spanish control and English control, some 1,500 slaves escaped into the mountains to form maroon communities.
1656	Juan de Bolas led many of the escaped slaves in the maroon communities of the mountains of Jamaica down to the plains and the coast with a deal in which the English granted pardon and freedom. Many maroons, however, would elect to remain in the mountains.
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1784	slave uprising on Jamaica
1795-1796	2d Maroon War on Jamaica
1823	slave uprising on Jamaica
1824	slave uprising on Jamaica
1831	slave uprising on Jamaica

There appears below a record of [manumissions](#) on Jamaica, an island upon which until this date a £100 bond had been required by the churchwardens as security against a manumittee becoming a parish object of charity. The Act “for the removing of impediments to the manumission of Slaves by Owners having only a limited interest,” in this year in which yet another slave uprising was being suppressed, stipulated that “Whereas it is now required by law, in all cases of manumission by deed, that a Bond should be given to the Churchwardens of the parish for payment of an annuity of £5 for the maintenance of any slave intended to be manuminised, and such bond is in many cases unnecessary. Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid That it shall not be necessary to give such a bond to the churchwardens, provided that in lieu thereof the Slave, intended to be manuminised, shall be produced to the magistrates and Vestry of the Parish where such Slave shall reside, or it shall be otherwise shown to their satisfaction that the manumission is not given for the purpose of relieving the Owner from the obligation of maintaining an Aged or infirm Slave, a certificate thereof shall be given by the Vestry, and shall be annexed to, and entered in the Secretary’s Office with the Deed of Manumission.” Each such deed paper received in the Secretary’s Office required a 5/- Stamp, and the Office receipt required an additional stamp worth 2/6. The fee for recording of deeds, whether manumissions or otherwise, was 2/6 a sheet (a sheet consisting of 160 words), and therefore of course the charge for recording a manumission depended upon the number of words the Instrument contained.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

We note that the ages of these persons receiving [manumission](#) are never placed on the record:

Date of Release	Name of Manumitter	Person(s) Manumitted	Cost of Redemption
May 28, 1796	Robert Davison	Pally Ohlson & her 2 children, Peg, William	10 shillings
January 1, 1800	Thomas Goldwin, Power of Attorney	Bessy al Bessy Foxen	£65
June 15, 1805	Caleb Powell	Mary Powell	10 shillings
June 25, 1805	Charles Rose Ellis	Charlotte & her 6 children, Elizabeth Dodd, Jane Dodd, Nancy Dodd, Charlotte Dodd, John, Sarah	£700
April 1, 1807	Sarah Baird	Bessy	10 shillings
July 2, 1811	John Morant Power of Attorney	James Allan	£110
July 2, 1811	John Morant Power of Attorney	John Allan	£139 11/-
October 8, 1812	Mary Richards	Hannah Richards & child, Mary Payne Golden	£160
March 20, 1813	William Henry Parker	Edward Cragie, Maria Williams	£90
June 4, 1813	Robert Jacobs	Joe al Joseph Jacobs Diamond	10 shillings
June 4, 1813	Henry Glassford Power of Attorney	Henry Palmer Moore	£160
August 16, 1814	Executors of Thomas Matthews's will	Henry	no value
July 27, 1815	Mary Taylor	Frank	£80
July 25, 1815	Edward Bullock	Ann al Mary Ann	£90
January 16, 1816	Trustees of Vere Free School	Mary Ann Shand & her child Margaret Ann Kohler	£140
February 1, 1816	Mary Douglas	Patrick Douglas	10 shillings
April 2, 1816	Catherine Denniss	William Norman	£50
November 25, 1817	Francis Elliott	Charles Clarke	10 shillings
March 10, 1817	Thomas Prescott	Julian Kein	10 shillings
June 4, 1817	Thomas Anderson	Thomas Anderson, Daniel Anderson	no value
July 2, 1817	Jacob Lopez Fonseca & ux.	Mary Lalote	£32
June 3, 1817	William Jno James & Hugh James	Eleanor Hackett & 2 children - Samuel, Malcolm Facey, James Malcolm Facey	£200
March 10, 1818	Mary Edwards	Sophia Jones & her unnamed female child	£120
April 3, 1818	William Rhodes James	Frances Samuels	£120
April 21, 1818	George Russell	Alexander Bruce	£60
April 27, 1818	Lawrence Hunter & ux.	Mary Goodwin	£140
May 7, 1818	Henry Cerf	Amelia	£60
June 11, 1818	Ann Dudley	William Brooks	10 shillings
July 1, 1818	Rebecca Cohall	William Hall	10 shillings



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

Date of Release			Name of Manumitter	Person(s) Manumitted	Cost of Redemption
August 1, 1818			David Boyd & ux.	Anne Hood	£160
August 22, 1818			John McGillivray	Robert Ann Mary	10 shillings
December 16, 1818			Executors of James Codrington	Sally McDonald	£100
December 23, 1818			John Woff	Susannah Johnston Woff	no value
October 4, 1819			Richard Jackson	Thomas Jennings	£180
January	19	1819	Mary Adelaide Caross	Margaret Saratine	10 shillings
April	27	1819	George Russell	Mary Bruce	£50
September	10	1819	John Goldson Budd	Eliza Goldson Budd	10 shillings
April	23	1819	Mary Williams et al	Louisa Miller	£100
February	1	1819	John Miller	Frances Miller, Henry Miller Andrew Miller	£50
March	1	1819	William Thomas Barnes	Edward Bennett	10 shillings
August	16	1819	Mary Gale Robertson & al	Benjamin	£140
May	1	1819	George Robert Johnson Jr.	Polly Gordon	10 shillings
?	?	1819	William Gale	Quaco	10 shillings
September 15, 1820			Bienvenida Judah et al	Elizabeth Bryan, Beatrice, Betsy & her child Henry	10 shillings
April	18	1820	George Harral	James Wright	10 shillings
December	30	1820	Georgette Denis Pellon	Marie Pierre Sucrinne	no value
May	19	1820	Kean Osborn Esq., & al	Patrick Kelly, Another slave	valued £150
January	18	1820	James [Sh]ipair	Morther Willis	£5
February	24	1821	Richard Ellis	Harry Day	£300
October	17	1820	David McNish	David, William	no value
November	20	1820	Henry Portlock Roberts	Mary Hancock & child Maria Pearce	10 shillings
April	3	1821	Robert Crasswell Gabay & ux.	William Murray	£50
December	30	1820	According to the will of Sarah Nibbs Gordon	Kitty al Catherine Gordon	no value
January	23	1821	Ann Moss	Jane Gardner, Tammy Seaton, Eleanor Love-more, William Dawson, John Wysenburg, Charles Lovemore	10 shillings
September	22	1820	Henry Oneal	John Ellis	10 shillings
November	27	1820	Edward Tyrrell	Mary Tyrrell, Edward Tyrell	£50
April	5	1820	Mary Hunter	Lucy Porter & her 6 children, Robert Bradley, Elizabeth Jump, Ann Jump, Henry Jump, William Jump, Mary Hunter, Edward Marshall	no value
May	19	1820	Sarah Spence	Thomas Farquharson	10 shillings



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

Date of Release			Name of Manumitter	Person(s) Manumitted	Cost of Redemption
September	1	1820	Robert Waugh	John Brown	£100 Sterling
August	10	1820	Isaac Nunes Da Costa jr.	Alfred al. Alfred Moore	10 shillings
March	3	1820	Thomas Samson	Quaco	10 shillings
March	3	1820	do	Elizabeth Messum	10 shillings
March	3	1820	do	Ruthy Huggins	10 shillings
March	3	1820	do	Nancy Lambert	10 shillings
March	3	1820	do	Sarah Huggins	10 shillings
March	3	1820	do	Frances Samson	10 shillings
January	1	1820	John Kelly	Jane Roberts	10 shillings
December	30	1820	Guethoncoeur Boisquehonene	Margaret	10 shillings
October	17	1820	Sarah Cole	Sarah Ann James	£180
December	18	1820	Ann Sarah Bailey Mytin	Catherine Thomas	£18
September	21	1820	Ruth Austin	Alick Lawrence	10 shillings
June	8	1820	Benjamin Scott	Fanny al Frances Davis	£80
August	1	1820	Rachael Thomas	Maria Freeman & child, Mary Baker, Freeman	10 shillings
May	19	1820	Kean Coburn & ux.	James Knight	no value
August	16	1820	James Mackean Smith	James Baircliffe	10 shillings
January	30	1821	Ann Clark Gott	Robert al Jn. Russell Cruikshank	10 shillings
September	7	1820	John Russell	Eliza Clarke	10 shillings
May	20	1820	Edmund Francis Green	Mary Hamilton & her child Nancy	£160
November	1	1820	Robert Allwood & ux	Susanna Miller	£5 Sterling
December	14	1820	Janett Bogle	James Hay	£160 Cy.
December	14	1820	George N Darley	Diana Thomson	£60
September	28	1820	James Fraser	Nelly al Eleanor Fraser	no value
November	10	1820	Rachael Whitehead	Isabella al Isabella Roe	10 shillings
September	16	1820	Thomas Freeman	Thomas Handley Brook	10 shillings
March	15	1820	Alexander McCallum	Alexander Gray	£140
October	6	1820	William Reeves	Ann Charlton	10 shillings
August	18	1820	Timothy Banton Mullings	William Mullings	£140
January	12	1821	Alexander Menzies & ux.	Elizabeth Burke	10 shillings
December	11	1820	Sarah Beal Willacy	Lisbon	10 shillings
February	10	1820	George Allan	Elizabeth Price	10 shillings
March	15	1820	Margaret Grant	June Hall	10 shillings



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SERVILE INSURRECTION

Date of Release			Name of Manumitter	Person(s) Manumitted	Cost of Redemption
January	30	1821	Sarah Mitchell Sansom	Harry al Harry Henrey	10 shillings
January	27	1821	Geremiah Weakes & ux.	Elizabeth Hall	£90
March	22	1821	John McDorman	George Gardner	10 shillings
January	12	1821	Eleanor Good	Rose	£40
January	20	1821	Mary Hall	Eleanor Bartell Ballantine	£140
February	10	1821	Susanna Gall	Patience & Susanna Thomas	no value
February	23	1821	Hon. James Lewis	Mary Brue	no value
February	10	1821	John Hill Berry	Mary Ann Hill Berry & 3 children, John Hill Berry, William Hill Berry, George Hill Berry	10 shillings
February	23	1821	Do	Lucy Jones	no value
July	1	1821	Mary Hunter	William Shea, John Marshall	no value
February	23	1821	Martha Fisher	Jemmy al James Fisher, John Fisher	£30
September	26	1821	Elizabeth Truxton & Bency Wilson	Mimba al Phillis Thomas & child Ann Dorman al Ann Hope	10 shillings
February	8	1821	Samuel Walker & ux. & al	Abigail Stormer	£25
April	2	1820	Sir Simon Horton Clarke, Bart. Power of Attorney	Elizabeth McDonald & children, James Lobban, Alexander Lobban, Mary Lobban, Margaret Lobban	£315
January	2	1821	William Henry Hall	Edward Neilson	£50
June	12	1820	Sir Home Popham	July	£100
March	6	1821	Alexander Ackman & ux.	Eleanor Carter Spalding	£140
July	?	1820	Jasper Taylor Hall Power of Attorney	William Wright, Eliza Tierney, Jenny Wright, Mary Clannside	no value
March	10	1820	John Lewis	Kate	10 shillings
February	22	1820	Melchior Graham	Eliza Cross & 3 children, Elizabeth, Mary, William George	no value
March	11	1821	Rebecca Stewart	Thomas Stewart, Rebecca Murray	10 shillings
March	1	1821	Andrew Bogle	Aimable	10 shillings
March	13	1821	William Smith Cruikshank	William Smith Cruikshank, Frances Smith Sadler	10 shillings
March	20	1821	Rose Roche	Richard Hughes	no value
March	12	1821	Rev. F.I.H. Rodrigues de Araeys	Marie Noel & son, Alphonse	no value
February	21	1821	Samuel Rogers	Ider Brown, Ororo Brown & her 2 children,, Colly Brown, Godfrey Brown	10 shillings
March	30	1821	Leah Phoinning	Sarah Dias Phoinning	10 shillings
March	17	1821	John Escoffery	John Valteau	10 shillings



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SLAVE REVOLT

Date of Release			Name of Manumitter	Person(s) Manumitted	Cost of Redemption
November	20	1820	Mary Gambel	Mary Ann Carter	10 shillings
March	14	1821	Bryan Edwards, p attornies.	Laetitia	£140
March	24	1821	Eleanor Hughes Willacy	Mary	10 shillings
March	1	1821	Mary Eliza Davis	Leah Ann Thomas	10 shillings
March	9	1821	William Rainsford	Benjamin Fenby	£100
March	19	1821	Alexander McCallum	Ann McCallum	no value
March	29	1821	Mary Taylor	Hazzard al William Bartholomew	£100
April	2	1821	Frances Cross	Robert Higgins	10 shillings
August	29	1820	Charlotte McPherson & others	Ann Gylliatt & 7 children, Rosy Ann Gylliatt, John Anderson, Samuel Anderson, Jeanette Anderson, Mary Anderson, James Anderson, Robert Anderson	£700
September	29	1820	Thomas Napier	Eleanor al Eleanor Thomas	10 shillings
?	?	1820	Gracey Halhead	Margian Halhead	10 shillings
October	6	1820	Jane Williamson	Margaret Williamson	£140
March	21	1821	Patrick McDonnell & wife	Mary Watson	10 shillings
September	20	1820	Elizabeth Hammond	William Hammond	10 shillings
April	21	1821	Jean Baptiste Cadou	Jean Baptiste Cadou	10 shillings
April	13	1821	Charlotte G. Bullock	Kitty Bullock	10 shillings
December	23	1820	William Davis	Lucretia White	10 shillings
February	1	1821	William Grant	Elizabeth Thayter & 2 children, James Grant, Edward Grant	10 shillings
February	1	1821	Exors of Alexander Kinlock according to will	Elizabeth Kinlock & child, Helen Kinlock	£150
April	21	1821	Susanna Edwards	James Lamb	£42
April	29	1821	William Laws	John Harris	10 shillings
February	12	1821	Janet Brown	Edward Ashley	no value
May	3	1821	Exor Of Adelaide Penaud according to will	Adelaide Bethsy	no value
February	14	1821	Milbrough Elrington Power of Attorney	Molly al Mary Spencer	50/-
March	24	1821	Thomas Nicholson Swigle	Frances Millward Hammond	no value
June	8	1820	James Minot	Faithful	10 shillings
May	13	1821	Hon. James Lee	Edward James Lee	10 shillings
May	10	1821	Elizabeth Perkins	John Dormont	10 shillings
March	26	1821	Charles Duke Bailey	Sarah Blake, Jane Dawkins, George Dawkins	10 shillings



SLAVE REVOLT

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Date of Release			Name of Manumitter	Person(s) Manumitted	Cost of Redemption
November	22	1820	Stephen Denton Power of Attorney	Rachael Harriot	£300
November	10	1821	Louis Horace de Jannon & ux	Nerine	no value
November	22	1820	Stephen Denton Power of Attorney	John Pool	10 shillings
April	18	1820	Andrew White	James Gillespie	10 shillings
August	5	1820	Mary Field Stevenson	Mary Ann Lynch	10 shillings
January	24	1820	Samuel Dare	William Bell	no value
August	5	1820	William Bonaby	Cassander al Susannah, Williams Bonaby	10 shillings
May	12	1821	James Smith	William Selby	no value
November	11	1820	Ann Barton & others	Louisa Phillips Bayley	10 shillings
April	3	1821	John Williams	Mary	10 shillings
June	2	1821	Elizabeth Reid	Jennett James	10 shillings
January	20	1820	Robert Alexander	Jonathan Worrall	10 shillings
February	3	1821	Judith Waters	Eleanor Tingling Hammonds	£33
April	27	1821	James Johnston	Margaret Hay, John Hay	£200
April	11	1821	James Johnston	Sappho & 2 children, James Hay, William Hay	£260
January	22	1821	James Hunt	Jack al John Sewell	£110
January	27	1821	William Finlay & wife	Margaret Johnson	£80
March	30	1821	Robert Thomas Downer	Alexander, George, Jane, Sarah, Richard	£200
April	11	1821	Esther Da Costa	Cecelia Anderson	£32
March	28	1821	Executor of Lewis Mazel according to will	Edmond	no value
March	21	1821	Elizabeth Sarah Ann Taylor	Hannah Jones	£5
April	17	1821	William Frankson & al	Thomazina Moore	10 shillings
April	4	1821	Mary Lewis	Henry Bryan	10 shillings
February	15	1821	Andrew Arcedeckne Power of Attorney	Rebecca Huntington	£140
February	15	1821	Andrew Arcedeckne Power of Attorney	Catherine Sim & child, Jessie Grant	£260
January	10	1821	Charles Seymore Cockburn	John Burnside	£200
April	6	1821	Jean Baptiste Cadou	Julie	no value
November	11	1821	Sarah McQuestin	Memory	10 shillings
July	15	1829	George Preston	William Hunt	10 shillings

SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1826

➡ [Nicholas Marcellus Hentz](#) and his wife the novelist Mrs. Caroline Lee Whiting Hentz relocated from [Northampton](#), Massachusetts to Chapel Hill, where he would be a professor of modern languages at the University of [North Carolina](#).



The white citizens of Newbern, Targorough, and Hillsborough, [North Carolina](#) were becoming fearful of [servile insurrection](#). The white citizens of Newbern, upon learning that perhaps 40 of their [slaves](#) had assembled in a nearby swamp for unknown purposes, surrounded that swamp and proceeded to kill every last one of them.

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: We find in the planting colonies all degrees of advocacy of the trade, from the passiveness of Maryland to the clamor of Georgia. Opposition to the trade did not appear in Georgia, was based almost solely on political fear of insurrection in Carolina, and sprang largely from the same motive in Virginia, mingled with some moral repugnance. As a whole, it may be said that whatever opposition to the slave-trade there was in the planting colonies was based principally on the political fear of insurrection.

SLAVE REVOLT

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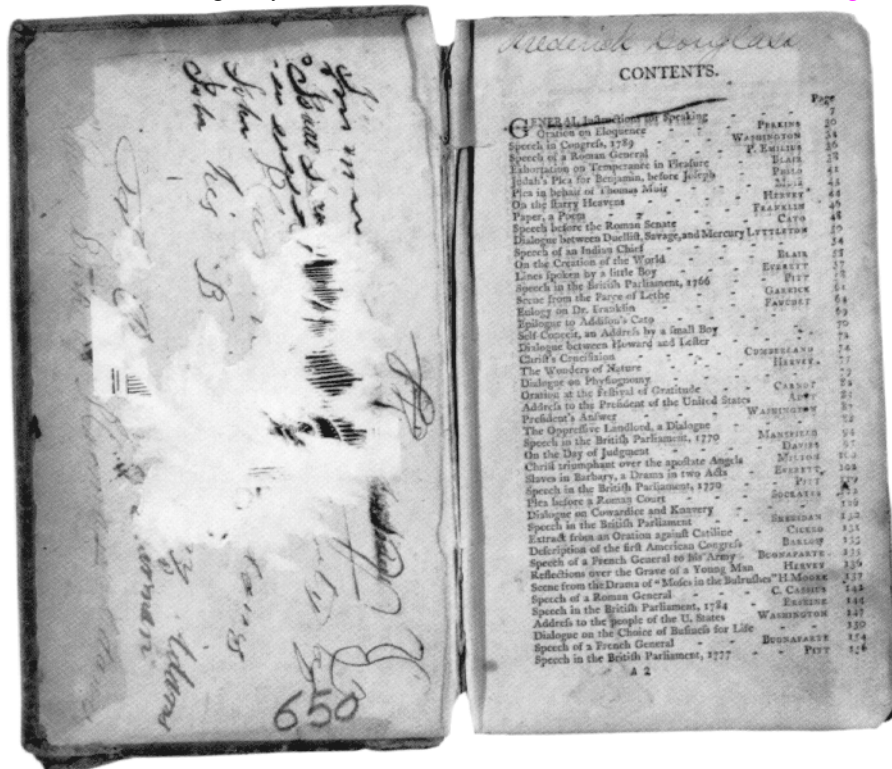
1830



In this, the year of the 1st National Negro Convention, [Frederick Douglass](#), aged about 12, purchased from Knight's bookstore for the carefully saved sum of \$0.⁵⁰ a book titled THE COLUMBIAN ORATOR. This was a collection of speeches first published in 1797, and the editor had been Caleb Bingham. Some of the material dealt, in the classical manner, with freedom from enslavement.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

The actual copy is still extant — it was found in his library after his death and is at the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site managed by the National Park Service at Cedar Hill near [Washington DC](#).⁶⁵



65. As of 1996, this volume was being republished for the umpteenth time.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

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1831



There were [servile insurrections](#) on the islands of Martinique, Antigua, St. Jago, Caraccas, and Tortola.



August 21, Sunday night-August 22, very early Monday morning: The Virginia legislature was involved in a lengthy debate on a serious proposal for the abolition of the institution of slavery in that state, a debate which would be truncated by events.

A black American named Nathaniel Turner who was almost 31 years of age decided to attempt to free himself from being “owned” by a white American named Putnam Moore who was at the time an infant, and also free other black people in Southampton, Virginia who were being kept in captivity by white people. Of course, to get free of this violence at once, there would of necessity be more violence, for such is the way of the world. Initially he and his group of 70 compatriots would murder his master, Joseph Travis, and his master’s family. Some 60 whites would be killed by the blacks during the first phase of the fighting, while there still was the element of surprise, and at least 100 blacks would be killed by the whites in the second phase of the fighting,

SLAVE REVOLT

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after a general alert had been sounded. [Nat Turner](#)'s sole personal victim was a young white woman named Margaret Whitehead. In our own era William Styron has commented:



The principal item I had to deal with, and freely reject, was that which involved the character of Nat Turner himself. The fact: he was a person of conspicuous ghastliness.... A singularly gifted and intelligent madman, but mad nonetheless. No attempts on my part of sympathetic reinterpretation could alter this conclusion: his apocalyptic and deranged visions, his heavenly signs and signals, his belief in his own divinely ordained retributive mission, his obsessive fasting and prayer, his blood-thirsty megalomania and self-identification with the Deity ... there was no shaking the fact that on the record Nat Turner was a dangerous religious lunatic.

[William Lloyd Garrison](#)'s comment, made at that time, was "I do not condemn **them** and approve similar conduct in **white** men." Turner had done but the same as "our fathers in slaughtering the British."

The [servile insurrection](#) brought the Virginia legislature's debate over the abolition of the institution of slavery to an end simply by rendering it political suicide for elected officials to continue to consider any such proposal. In fact, a bill was introduced before the Georgia legislature, to fund a reward of \$15,000.⁰⁰ for the person who would kidnap the abolitionist Garrison and bring him down south for "trial."

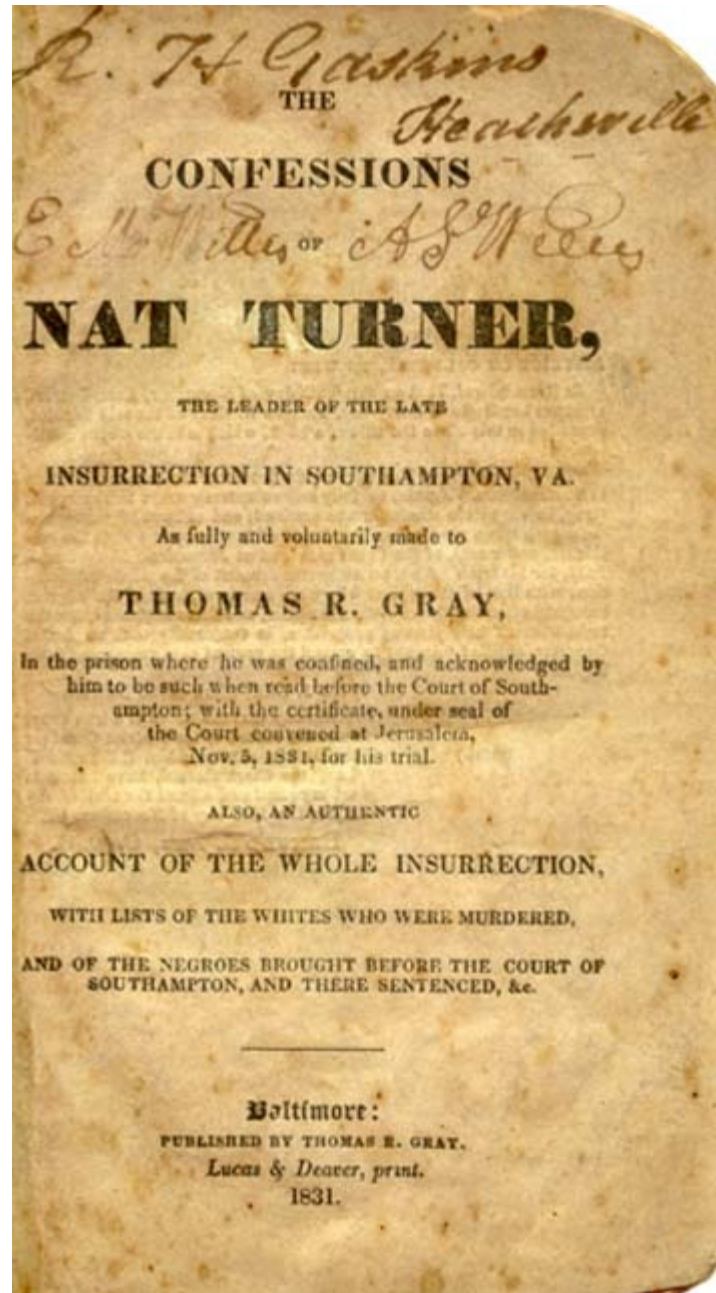
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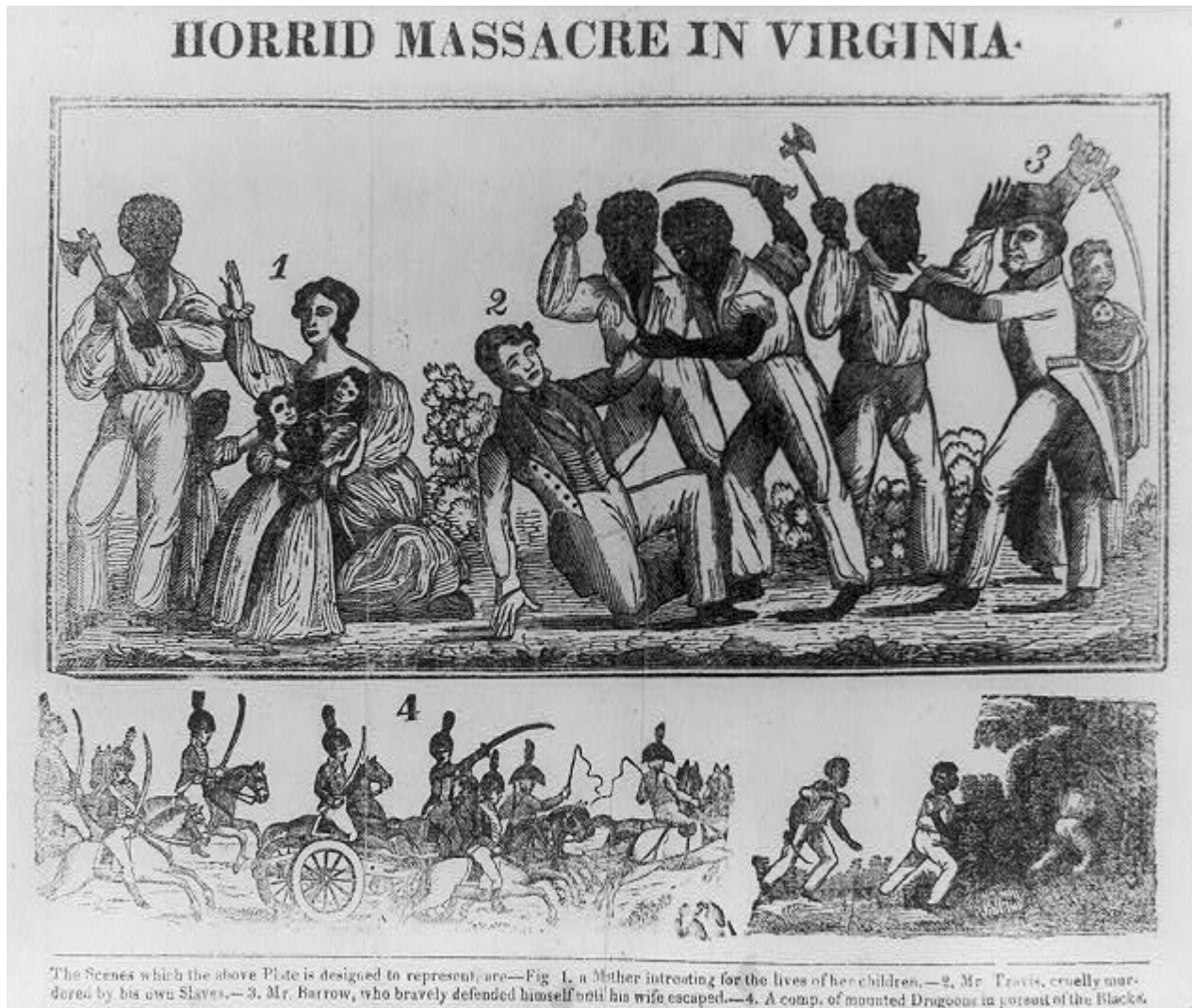
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SERVILE INSURRECTION



 August 22, Monday morning: In the very early hours, [Nat Turner](#) and comrades began the “Turner rebellion,” in Southampton County, Virginia.

[SERVILE INSURRECTION](#)



“I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.”
— [W.H. Auden](#), [September 1, 1939](#)



 August 22, Monday evening: As [Nat Turner](#)’s [servile insurrection](#) collapsed the surviving perpetrators fled into the Great Dismal Swamp of Virginia and [North Carolina](#).

SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT



Fall: Race panic was endemic among the white people of [North Carolina](#) again, as it had been during the previous [Christmas](#) season. This time, however, things got very much out of hand. The rumors that spread were even sillier than before, but this time [tortures](#) extracted some “confessions” which fueled the fires of fearfulness and suspiciousness. (Somebody may have been putting two and two together, and concluding to their great shock that people just didn’t appreciate being enslaved and that it may sometimes therefore be somewhat dangerous to make a practice of enslaving others.) At least 30 [slaves](#) were killed. Many of their heads were stuck on poles.



THE MARKET FOR HUMAN BODY PARTS

Then late in the autumn a letter was received in Jerusalem, Virginia, one that had ostensibly been posted in Boston. The letter was signed “Nero” and purported to have been written by a mulatto former Virginia slave (he indicated that his white master had sired him upon one of his negro women, and that he had run off after his master’s death). The letter made only scornful references to Christianity and made only contemptuous references to black slaves. Nevertheless the writing was full of wishful thinking about servile insurrection — [servile insurrection](#) that was to be sponsored by an elite, capable of manipulating the “prejudices and superstitions” of enslaved Africans.



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION



At about this period some of the Inhabitants of Chesterfield County were creating a Resolution:

We the inhabitants of the upper end of Chesterfield County having amongst us an enemy that is restless in their disposition; and savage in their nature; and feeling alarmed at the fate of the Females and children of Southhampton, and not knowing how soon a like Tragedy may take place amongst us. We therefore enter into the following resolutions. Viz.

Resolution the 1st:

We resolve that if any attempt should be made; that we will as soon thereafter as possible remove our Families to the Following places.; Viz. To the House of William L. Overton. John Spear. and John Bass.

Resolution the 2th:

We also resolve that we will petition the Governor of the State for a Sufficiency of arms and ammution to arm the men in the Neighbourhood—say probably five Muskets.

Resolution the 3rd:

We resolve also that we will keep a strict patrole and we all agree that we will each bear his part of fatiegue.

Resolution the 4th.

We also resolve that William Goode and William L. Overton be appointed to wait on the Governor for the purpose of Stating the Situation of the Neighbourhood, and request the arms &c. as before named, and we also agree to be equally bound with them for the return of the said arms—

<i>Wm Goode</i>	<i>Richard Goode</i>	<i>John Henley</i>	<i>John Rison</i>
<i>W. L. Overton</i>	<i>Wm W Moody</i>	<i>Saml. Wilkinson</i>	<i>Vincent Cheatham</i>
<i>Elijah Gresham</i>	<i>F. Goode</i>	<i>Vincent Markham</i>	<i>Wm Wilkinson</i>
<i>J.L. Bass</i>	<i>George Markham</i>	<i>Herbert E Jones</i>	
<i>John Goode</i>	<i>Wm R Robertson</i>		
<i>Wm W Osborne</i>			
<i>Joseph G. Woodfin</i>			
<i>John Bass</i>			
<i>Wm Goode Jr</i>			
<i>James C. Gates</i>			
<i>HW Robertson</i>			
<i>Mack Goode</i>			
<i>Henry W. Tatum</i>			
<i>Thos. A Spears</i>			
<i>John Spears</i>			
<i>Arther Bass</i>			
<i>Mack Wilkinson</i>			
<i>Danl L. Wooldridge</i>			
<i>Young Condrey</i>			



December 27, Tuesday: While on a Mississippi River steamboat en route to New Orleans, Alexis de Tocqueville managed an interview with [Sam Houston](#) on the subject of native Americans:

- Q. These notions of justice you speak of are very crude. They only apply to murder anyhow. What happens in case of theft?
A. Theft was absolutely unknown among the Indians before the Europeans introduced among them objects calculated to be a lively temptation to their cupidity.



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Since then laws have had to be made to punish stealing. Among the Creeks, who are beginning to civilize themselves and have a written penal code, stealing is punished by whipping. It's the chiefs who pronounce sentence.

Adultery by the woman is punished in the same way; in addition they usually slit the nose and ears of the guilty. Creek law punishes fornication equally.

- Q. What is the position of women among the Indians?
A. Complete servitude. The women are burdened with all the unpleasant jobs and live in great degradation.
- Q. Is polygamy allowed?
A. Yes. You can have as many wives as you can feed. Divorce is likewise permitted.

Upon arrival in New Orleans, De Tocqueville would have a conversation with M. Guillemin on the fate of mulattoes there:

There exists, as a matter of fact, a great deal of immorality among the coloured people. But how could it be otherwise? The law destines, as it were, coloured women to debauchery. You've no doubt noticed, in the place reserved for mulattoes in the theatre and elsewhere, women as white as the most beautiful Europeans. Eh bien! For all that they belong to the proscribed race, because tradition makes it known that there is African blood in their veins. Yet all these women, and many others who, without being as white, possess yet almost the tint and the graces of Europeans and have often received an excellent education, are forbidden by law to marry into the ruling and rich race of whites. If they wish to contract a legitimate union, they have to marry with the men of their caste, and partake their humiliation. For the men of colour don't even enjoy the shameful privilege accorded to their women. Even did neither their colour nor their education betray them, and that's often the case, they would not be the less condemned to perpetual indignities. Not a [illegible] white but has the right to maltreat the happy person in his way and to thrust him in to the muck crying, "Get out of the way, mulatto!"

SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

The HMS *Beagle*, a 10-gun Cherokee-class brig sloop of the Royal Navy, set out from Plymouth Sound on a voyage to the Cape Verde Islands, the coast of South America, the Strait of Magellan, the Galápagos Islands, Tahiti, New Zealand (where during this year whaling stations were being established at Tory Channel and Preservation Inlet), Australia, the Maldives, and Mauritius (where the dodo had been extinct for so long that the locals had quite forgotten it had ever been on the island), to conduct a survey for the Royal Navy.

“Captain’s Companion” to the vessel’s unstable skipper, Robert FitzRoy, was a young gentleman named [Charles Robert Darwin](#), who had been not much of a theology student and not much of a medical student, accompanied by one manservant. During this trip Darwin would contract Chagas’ disease from the bite of a South American kissing beetle



BIOLOGY

The vessel carried aboard it a naturalist — the ship’s surgeon Robert McCormick.⁶⁶



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

The ship was to carry three surviving South Americans, including *O'rundel'lico* or "Jemmy Button," back to



their home to civilize and Christianize their relatives.

On the island of Jamaica in the British West Indies, some 20,000 slaves revolted. They would manage to kill 14 whites and destroy over a million pounds of property before being put down with 207 deaths. Then, of

66. "Captains Companion" was a necessary concession of the stratified society of that time to the weakness of human nature, a convention quite as necessary as the barrel of limes that prevented scurvy among the ordinary limeys who ate hardtack and barreled pork: on such long sailing voyages around the earth, the captain could not allow himself to develop any fellowship with members of the seamen or with the subordinate officers and, without some kind of companionship, would therefore tend to become pathologically isolated. This would prove to be especially the case in regard to Captain "Hot Coffee" FitzRoy, an illegitimate by-product of the British royalty. To be selected, Darwin had had to pass the captain's inspection of his pug nose (a nose which seemed to indicate that one would be as pugnacious and as obnoxious as a bulldog), to be satisfied that it was an acceptable nose since FitzRoy, who had a nose like [Henry Thoreau](#)'s, believed that a man's nose indicated his moral character. Refer to:

1819: C.C.H.'s "Noseology: A Dissertation on the Intellectual Faculties, as Manifested by the Various Configurations of the Nose" in [Blackwood's Magazine](#) 5

1834: Alexander Walker's PHYSIOGNOMY FOUNDED ON PHYSIOLOGY

1838: Samuel Ferguson's "A Vision of Noses" in [Blackwood's Magazine](#) 43: 648-60

1842: "Notes on Noses" in the [Illustrated London News](#) (May 28, 1842): 36

1848: George Jabet's NASOLOGY (reprinted in 1851, 1864, and 1893)

1852: Eden Warwick's (George Jabet's) NOTES ON NOSES. London: Richard Bentley.



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

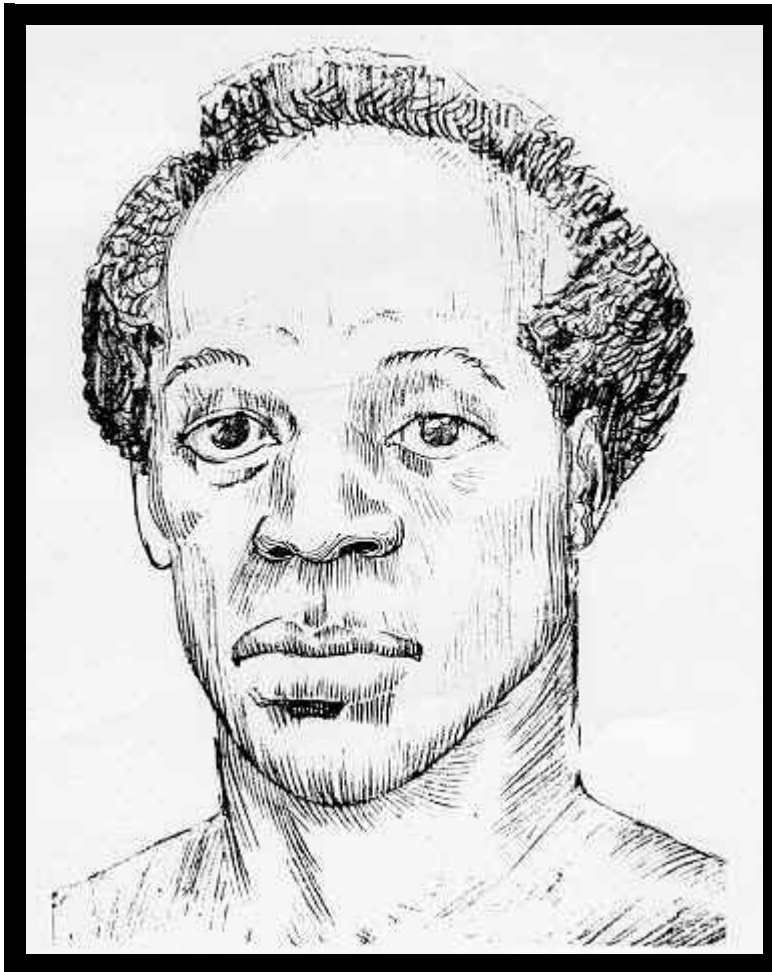
course, some 500 more of the slaves would need to be executed.

1640-1713	seven slave revolts in the islands of the British West Indies
1655	With Jamaica in transition between Spanish control and English control, some 1,500 slaves escaped into the mountains to form maroon communities.
1656	Juan de Bolas led many of the escaped slaves in the maroon communities of the mountains of Jamaica down to the plains and the coast with a deal in which the English granted pardon and freedom. Many maroons, however, would elect to remain in the mountains.
1668	“Lobby’s rebellion” on Jamaica — several hundred black slaves escaped to the mountains.
1725-1740	1st Maroon War on Jamaica
March 1, 1738-1739	The 1st Maroon War on Jamaica ended in a treaty guaranteeing freedom for the maroons, the deal being that henceforward they would capture and turn in for a reward any new slave or bond-laborer escapees.
1760	slave uprising on Jamaica
1776	slave uprising on Jamaica
1784	slave uprising on Jamaica
1795-1796	2d Maroon War on Jamaica
1823	slave uprising on Jamaica
1824	slave uprising on Jamaica
1831	slave uprising on Jamaica

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The utterly strange thing about this slave revolt is that it originated as an exercise in nonviolent passive resistance. On the Kensington Estate in St. James on Montego Bay, the slave Sam Sharpe, the main instigator, was a “daddy” or lay leader of local Baptists. By Sam’s plan the slaves were to begin to refuse to work on [Christmas Day](#), until their grievances about their treatment and about the consideration of freedom were accepted by the state owners and managers. Adherents of his plan signed on by kissing the BIBLE. When the whites heard of this, troops were called into St. James and warships stood by in Montego Bay and Black River with their guns trained on the towns. The Kensington Estate’s Great House being set on fire was the signal that the resistance had begun. When a series of other fires broke out, however, it became clear that the non-violent resistance which Sam had imagined was not going to be feasible. Armed rebellion and seizing of property spread mostly through the western parishes of the island, and by the first week in January the uprising would be put down. A total of 14 whites would be killed.



Samuel Sharpe would be hanged on May 23, 1832, proclaiming that “I would rather die upon yonder gallows than live in [slavery](#).” In 1834 the Abolition Bill would be passed by the British Parliament and in 1838 slavery would be abolished.

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1832



January: Some member of the Virginia House of Delegates having been so incautious as to refer to [Nat Turner's servile insurrection](#) of the previous year as having turned out after all the alarms to be a "petty affair," delegate James McDowell, Jr. seized the opportunity to rise and make his considered response. You simply cannot deprive a white man of his God-given right to be terrified and to overreact by abusing others:

Now, sir, I ask you, I ask gentlemen, in conscience to say, was that a "petty affair" which startled the feelings of your whole population; which threw a portion of it into alarm, a portion of it into panic; which wrung out from an affrighted people the thrilling cry, day after day, conveyed to your executive, "*We are in peril of our lives – send us an army for defence!*" Was that a "petty affair," which drove families from their homes; which assembled women and children in crowds, without shelter, at places of common refuge, in every condition of weakness and infirmity, under every suffering which want and terror could inflict, yet willing to endure all, willing to meet death from famine, death from climate, death from hardships, preferring any thing rather than the horrors of meeting it from a domestic assassin? Was that a "petty affair," which erected a peaceful and confiding portion of the State into a military camp; which *outlawed from pity the unfortunate beings whose brothers had offended*; which barred every door, penetrated every bosom with fear or suspicion; which so banished every sense of security from every man's dwelling, that, let but a hoof or horn break upon the silence of the night, and an aching throb would be driven to the heart? The husband would look to his weapon, and the mother would shudder, and weep upon her cradle! Was it the fear of Nat. Turner and his deluded, drunken handful of followers, which produced such effects? Was it this that induced distant counties, where the very name of Southampton was strange, to arm and equip for a struggle? No, sir, it was the *suspicion eternally attached to the slave himself*; the suspicion that a Nat. Turner might be in every family – that the same bloody deed might be acted over at any time, and in any place – that the materials for it were spread through the land, and were always ready for a like explosion. Nothing but the force of this withering apprehension, nothing but the paralyzing and deadening weight with which it falls upon and prostrates the heart of every man who has helpless dependants to protect, nothing but this could have thrown a brave people into consternation, or could have made any portion of this powerful Commonwealth, for a single instant, to have quailed and trembled.

That being said, delegate Henry Berry, Esq. desired to add his thoughts in regard to the unfortunate necessity for a, shudder, black genocide:

Sir, I believe that no cancer on the physical body was ever more certain, steady and fatal in its progress, than this cancer on the political body of Virginia. It is eating into her very vitals. And shall we admit that the evil is past remedy? Shall we act the part of a puny patient, suffering under the ravages of a fatal disease, who would say the remedy is too painful?



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Pass as severe laws as you will to keep these unfortunate creatures in ignorance, it is in vain, unless you can extinguish that spark of intellect which God has given them. Sir, we have, as far as possible, closed every avenue by which light might enter their minds. We have only to go one step further —to extinguish the capacity to see the light— and our work will be completed. They would then be reduced to the level of the beasts of the field, and we should be safe; and I am not certain that we would not do it, if we could find out the necessary process, and that under the plea of necessity. But, sir, this is impossible; and can man be in the midst of freemen, and not know what freedom is? Can he feel that he has the power to assert his liberty, and will he not do it? Yes, sir, with the certainty of Time's current, he will do it whenever he has the power. The data are before us all, and every man can work out the process for himself. Sir, a death-struggle must come between the two classes, in which one or the other will be extinguished forever. Who can contemplate such a catastrophe as even possible, and be indifferent?

This cries out for some elaboration. This happens to be an area in which we always need to beware of a tendency that we do have, to exaggerate in one direction or the other. What is unclear in today's resistance to a clear consensus about servile insurrections in the United States (either that nothing worrisome had ever occurred, or that none of the situations that had occurred had ever amounted to any real threat to white government) is what was and is at stake. Back then, what had been at stake had been white fearfulness and scaremongering. However, what is at stake now is considerably different from that: to be good and honorable people now, it seems, we need to embrace a childish notion that what we want to have happened is what did happen — that slave revolts must have occurred in large numbers and must have amounted to a lot, simply because we now want most slaves at most times to have been admirably courageous, potentially heroic, ready for revolution, and fearless in the face of death — just as we ourselves of course would be under similar circumstances. If we can rest assured that the slaves back then had been in constant rebellion rather than merely being chaotically resistive, how would this improve our understanding of the nature of the Southern slave system and of the political and social ideologies that sustained that system, and of the counter-trends and contradictions that undermined that system? In the real world, history cares nothing for our feelings and desires — what actually happened is merely what actually happened, not what we were fantasizing either at the time or at some later date. The assertions of white people about revolt and rebellion back in the days of slavery seem to have been more “about” white people's emotional needs than “about” what was actually going down, and likewise, nowadays, our fantasies about this past seem likewise to be more “about” our emotional needs than “about” any actual historical trajectory.

Historians of slavery in the United States have critiqued Aptheker's AMERICAN NEGRO SLAVE REVOLTS for his exaggeration, distortion, and wishful thinking about the nature and extent of slave rebellion, while at the same moment seeing that book, as Eugene Genovese did, as “seminal” in the field. But resistance was not rebellion, white Southerners' fear of rebellion was not rebellion itself, and conspiracy to rebel was not the brutal fact itself. “Reports” of planned “rebellions” amounted to mere reports of mere plans unless powerful acts can be confirmed by historical research. Here is a sampling of observations of a few historians of slavery:

“There was no significant revolt in the thirty years between Nat Turner and the outbreak of the Civil War, although the fear of such rebellion remained very powerful in the white community.”
Peter Parish, SLAVERY: HISTORY AND HISTORIANS, page 71.

“A slave revolt anywhere in the Americas, at any time, had poor prospects and required organizers with extraordinary daring and resourcefulness. In the United States those prospects, minimal during the eighteenth century, declined to zero during the



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nineteenth. The slaves of the Old South should not have to answer for their failure to mount more frequent and effective revolts; they should be honored for having tried at all under the most discouraging circumstances." Eugene Genovese, *ROLL, JORDAN, ROLL*, page 594.

"In fact, slaves hardly ever rebelled. 'What is most characteristic, most striking in the history of slavery,' one scholar has recently pointed out, 'is not revolt but the absence of revolt.' M.I. Finley believed that in all of human history there were only four full-scale rebellions in which slaves engaged in organized warfare against the armies of their masters." James Oakes, *SLAVERY AND FREEDOM*, page 152

"Concrete political realities, (that is, power relationships) shaped the specific patterns of resistance in the slave South. The high ratio of whites to blacks, the relatively small size and dispersed nature of slaveholdings, the presence of well-armed resident masters who took an active interest in local affairs, and ... the region's political stability combined to create conditions that were extremely unfavorable for armed rebellion. It is hardly surprising, then, that American slaves engaged in few such rebellions, and that those few were by international standards small and easily suppressed." Peter Kolchin, *AMERICAN SLAVERY*, page 155-156.

"These incidents, in practical terms, constituted resistances to slavery rather than attempts to overthrow the social order." Cedric Robinson, *BLACK MOVEMENTS IN AMERICA*, page 39.

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SLAVE REVOLT

1834

➡ Nathan Johnson and the Reverend Jacob Perry, minister of the African Christian Church ([New Bedford](#)'s first black religious congregation — remember, Johnson had in 1822 ➡ petitioned the all-white Quakers for membership in the [Religious Society of Friends](#), and had of course been utterly stonewalled on account of his race) and president of the New-Bedford Union Society (its first antislavery society, formed not by the all-white New Bedford Friends but by the local free people of color), attended the 5th National Negro Convention in Philadelphia. This Convention adopted a nonviolent declaration similar to the Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Society, as written by half-black [William Whipper](#) of Pennsylvania.



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1835



Friend [Moses Brown](#)'s nephew Nicholas Brown was one out of a very long list of vice-presidents of a newly founded Providence Anti-Abolition Society. For information about the agenda of this curious group, you may want to refer to "Anti-abolition Meeting," an article in the [Providence Daily Journal](#) for November 4th, 1835 which is to be found on the website of the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice at <http://dl.lib.brown.edu/slaveryandjustice/>:

Resolved, That we regard the efforts of the Anti-Slavery Societies as most injurious to the welfare of the slaves; that, in our opinion, all such efforts lead to exasperate their passions, to agitate their minds with fallacious hopes; to render necessary their subjection to unwonted restraints; and, more than all, to postpone to an indefinite period all such changes in their condition as their owners, under the direction of an enlightened benevolence, might aim to accomplish.

Resolved, That, although the Anti-Slavery Societies disclaim all intention to excite servile insurrections, yet we believe that the tendency of their exaggerated statements and inflammatory appeals is, not only to create feverish discontent among the slaves, but to cause such an explosion of their worst passions as would spread havoc and consternation over entire regions of our country.⁶⁷

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67. Page 417 in Donna McDaniel's and Vanessa Julye's FIT FOR FREEDOM, NOT FOR FRIENDSHIP: QUAKERS, AFRICAN AMERICANS, AND THE MYTH OF RACIAL JUSTICE (Philadelphia: Quaker Press of Friends General Conference, 2009).

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At the racially segregated [Yearly Meeting School](#) of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) in [Providence, Rhode Island](#) that had been created by Friend [Moses Brown](#), things were not going swimmingly. Finding that the governing committees of the Yearly Meeting resisted his expenditures to develop the school, Friend John Griscom resigned from his position as headmaster of the academic department.



Two other teachers also left: Samuel Gummere was hired by a school that had been founded in 1833 in Haverford, Pennsylvania,



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and [Pliny Earle](#) decided to attend Medical College in Philadelphia.



The average annual enrollment of pupils would continue to decline.

In this year Friends Enoch Breed and Lydia Breed were replaced as superintendents by Friends Seth Davis and Mary Davis.

1819-1824.	Purinton, Matthew and Betsy.
1824-1835.	Breed, Enoch and Lydia.
1829-1835.	Gould, Stephen Wanton and Gould, Hannah , Asst. Supts.
1835-1836.	Davis, Seth and Mary.
1837.	Breed, Enoch and Lydia.
1838-1839.	Rathbun, Rowland and Alice.
1840-1844.	Wing, Allen and Olive.
1845-1846.	Thompson, Olney and Lydia.
1847.	Congdon, Jarvia and Lydia.
1847-1852.	Cornell, Silas and Sarah M.

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August 10, Monday: At Niblo's Garden in [New-York](#) Phineas Taylor Barnum started to exhibit blind and paralyzed black slave [Joyce Heth](#) under the pretense that it had been she who had nursed our illustrious founding father [George Washington](#).



BOTANIZING

Dr. [Reuben Crandall](#) was arrested after Harry King, a Georgetown, Virginia man, called on him in his office while he was unpacking some crates and boxes of stuff. The young man sighted “a pamphlet on anti-slavery lying on the table.” There were several such papers lying around, which the botanist had been using to press his plant specimens. He asked if he might have one to read, and “Dr. Crandall told him he might.” For this, Dr. Crandall would be held in the local lockup for almost 9 months awaiting trial for his life for the treason of incitement to [servile insurrection](#) (the same statute, written by [Thomas Jefferson](#), under which Captain John Brown would be tried and hanged) — and while living under these conditions he would acquire the

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“consumption,” or pulmonary [tuberculosis](#), that would destroy him.



Francis Scott Key, the [District of Columbia](#)'s DA, would attempt to persuade the judge to impose the death penalty upon [Prudence Crandall](#)'s younger brother.



Dr. Crandall had been charged with promulgating a false doctrine that the black American had equal rights with the white, with casting reflections on the chivalry of the south, and with intent to cause unrest among Negroes.⁶⁸ It was suggested that he had himself authored publications urging immediate emancipation of

68. THE TRIAL OF REUBEN CRANDALL, M.D., CHARGED WITH PUBLISHING AND CIRCULATING SEDITIOUS AND INCENDIARY PAPERS, &C. IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, WITH THE INTENT OF EXCITING SERVILE INSURRECTION . . . BY A MEMBER OF THE BAR. Washington DC, Printed for the Proprietors, 1836. (This 48-page pamphlet alleged that “The Trial of Crandall presents the first case of a man charged with endeavoring to excite insurrection among slaves and the free colored population that was ever brought before a judicial tribunal.”)



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slaves. Clearly this Un-American agitator deserved to be dead. A crowd of white Navy Yard workers therefore went to the Washington County Jail where he was being held, to agitate for his [lynching](#), and along the way a free black tavernkeeper, Beverly Snow, made some sort of derogatory remark about their wives. The crowd began by thoroughly trashing Snow's tavern, and then over two days and three nights of rioting, it smashed the windows of Negro churches, the Negro school, and various homes.

Drastic legislation would follow this "Snow Riot" in the [District of Columbia](#) — legislation further restricting the rights of free Negroes to assemble.⁶⁹

As part of the legal process, Dr. Crandall would be interrogated about his attitudes toward people of other races. There was a concern that he might share to some degree in the radical attitudes of his notorious elder sister Prudence. He assured his captors that "he would break up the school if he could, but his sister was a very obstinate girl." He informed them that he had another sister, younger, who was sharing in his older sister's attitudes, but that he had been hoping "that he could, in all events, get her away" from this bad influence.

69. Provine, Dorothy Sproles. THE FREE NEGRO IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 1800-1860. Thesis Louisiana State University Department of History, 1959, 1963



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1837



There was an uprising of [slaves](#) in [Cuba](#). By Spanish royal order in this year, no free person of color, not even a seaman, might come ashore either in [Cuba](#) or in Puerto Rico, not ever, not for any reason. (Don't let there be any part of "no" that you don't understand — the enslaved persons of color of the Spanish colonies are to encounter no such exemplars.)

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1839



Anonymous publication of [Elizur Wright, Junior](#)'s small volume [LA FONTAINE](#); A PRESENT FOR THE YOUNG.

In this year in which in England [Friend Joseph Sturge](#) was founding the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and in which in America John A. Collins was becoming general agent for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, for some reason abolitionism simply was not prospering. Those whites who had an economic investment in or social interest in or libidinal involvement in human enslavement were proving to be quite immune to, merely hardened and angered by, all the relentless propaganda. The initial idea, that first the abolitionists would convince the institutions of the North to be righteous, and then the North would bring righteous pressure on the South, had proved in application to be utterly disconnected from the reality of our condition. For instance, in eight years of agitation not a single one of the white religious denominations had separated into a northern sect opposed to human enslavement and a southern sect in favor of human enslavement, despite the standoff between their northern white congregations and their southern white congregations over this issue. Although there had been a few anti-enslavement advocates positioned in the US House of Representatives, there had also been enacted a very specific gag rule to silence them on this one central topic. The ideological and emotional commitment of a number of leaders in the struggle against practices of human enslavement, however, the ones whom I am here terming “pragmatics,” was that American democracy was basically sound, and that the flaws in American character that had led to this enslavement situation were minor and isolated flaws. A few agreements, a few insights, a few changes in the rules, and the institutions supporting the practice of human enslavement would crumble. There was no need to tamper with anyone's soul.

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Examples of this attitude were:

- [Elizur Wright, Jr.](#)
- Henry Brewster Stanton
- James Gillespie Birney (who wanted to establish a third political party, the “Liberty” party, which would be antislavery, and compete directly in the political process, making deals and peddling influence like the Republicans/Democrats of that era)



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In this year [Gerrit Smith](#) condemned his denomination, Presbyterianism, for its failure to denounce slavery, yet when it was proposed to him that young black men be trained in [Canada](#) and Mexico and sent into the slave states to lead revolts, he rejected that plan.

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Then there were the Garrisonians. The struggle between the two abolitionist psychologies, like the struggle between the Orthodox or Evangelical [Quakers](#) and the [Hicksites](#), was a struggle that can readily be described in terms of a binary split over a single issue. Previous analyzers of the split have attempted to conceive of a binary split between the abolitionists who wanted to mix anti-slavery with the “confounded woman question” and those who wanted to keep such issues in separate compartments, and have not been able to make a case for that analysis, or have attempted to conceive of a binary split between the abolitionists who embraced the principle of non-resistance to evil and those who regarded this principle as the pinnacle of wickedness, and have not been able to make a case for that analysis. Some have suggested that the split was not binary, that the struggle was between those abolitionists who wanted to be understood as “pragmatics,” and those abolitionists who wanted to be understood as “strugglers” and as “Come-outers.”

COME-OUTISM

These are not the analyses that I favor. In this “Kouroo” contexture, you will find, the analysis that I have favored is that of a binary split between, on the one hand, the abolitionists who wanted a future of racial integration, “amalgamation” as it was then called, in which all God’s children could live together on God’s holy mountain (these people known as “Hicksites,” a type case of this being Friend [Lucretia Mott](#)), and, on the other hand, the abolitionists who wanted a future of apartheid, of racial segregation, of Jim Crow, in which we were equal, more or less, but existed separately (these people known as “Quietist Friends,” and as “Orthodox Friends,” and as “Evangelical Friends,” a type case of this being Friend [Moses Brown](#)).



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1840



January: A [negrero](#) flying the Portuguese flag, the *Duquesa de Braganca*, master Moreno, on one of its three known [Middle Passage](#) voyages, had sailed from Mocambique on the east coast of Africa during November 1839 with a cargo of 720 enslaved Africans, and finally in this month after such an especially long voyage was arriving at its destination, a port on the coast of [Cuba](#).⁷⁰

Late in the month, President Martin Van Buren would decide to have the “erroneous principles” of *The U.S. v. The Libelants, etc., of the Schooner Amistad* appealed to the circuit court, which in effect would mean that the law in the case would be reconsidered by the US Supreme Court. Although Judge Andrew T. Judson’s decision would effectively rid America of the problem at hand by returning the blacks to Sierra Leone, this would constitute from our President’s point of view an unacceptable legal precedent: we could not tolerate establishing the idea that blacks might under any circumstances at all, as if they were white themselves, resort to violence in order to free themselves from unjust abuse, not merely abuse by other blacks but also abuse by whites.

The only safe legal principle would be that a black man may never under any circumstances object to being abused by a white man. On January 2nd the Richmond VA [Inquirer](#) had declared that the meaning of this case was that if white Americans ever became the victims of “black masters” they would owe to these black overlords their “compassion” and “sympathy.” Van Buren could not afford to seem to his Southern political supporters to be in favor of [servile insurrection](#). An appeal would delay the matter until after the presidential election, and thus would remove much of its political impact.⁷¹

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: In 1839 Pope Gregory XVI. stigmatized the slave-trade “as utterly unworthy of the Christian name;” and at the same time, although proscribed by the laws of every civilized State, the trade was flourishing with pristine vigor. Great advantage was given the traffic by the fact that the United States, for two decades after the abortive attempt of 1824, refused to co-operate with the rest of the civilized world, and allowed her flag to shelter and protect the slave-trade. If a fully equipped slaver sailed from New York, Havana, Rio Janeiro, or Liverpool, she had only to hoist the stars and stripes in

70. Clearly, there’s a terminology problem here. In an effort to resolve this terminology issue, at the Republican National Convention in [New York](#) during August 2004—at which the [Republican Party](#) would for four days make an effort to strip from its face its mask of hostility to the plight of the downtrodden and reveal its true countenance of benevolent conservatism and concern—these people would be sensitively referred to by a Hoosier Republican running for the US Senate as “involuntary immigrants.”

So, perhaps, this is a good point at which to insert a story about involuntary immigrants that has been passed on to us by Ram Varmha, a retired IBM engineer whose father had briefly served as Maharaja after the independence of Cochin. He relates the story as narrated to him by his paternal grandmother who lived in Thripoonithura, Cochin: “When my grandmother (born 1882) was a young girl she would go with the elder ladies of the family to the Pazhayannur Devi Temple in Fort Cochin, next to the Cochin Lanthia Palace built by the Dutch (Landers = Lanthia), which was an early establishment of the Cochin royal family before the administration moved to Thripoonithura. My grandmother often told us that in the basement of the Lanthia Palace, in a confined area, a family of Africans had been kept locked up, as in a zoo! By my Grandmother’s time all the Africans had died. But, some of the elder ladies had narrated the story to her of ‘Kappiries’ (Africans) kept in captivity there. It seems visitors would give them fruits and bananas. They were well cared for but always kept in confinement. My grandmother did not know all the details but according to her, ‘many’ years earlier, a ship having broken its mast drifted into the old Cochin harbor. When the locals climbed aboard, they found a crewless ship, but in the hold there were some chained ‘Kappiries’ still alive; others having perished. The locals did not know what to do with them. Not understanding their language and finding the Africans in chains, the locals thought that these were dangerous to set free. So they herded the poor Africans into the basement of the Cochin Fort, and held them in captivity, for many, many years! I have no idea when the initial incident happened, but I presume it took place in the late 1700s or early 1800s. This points to the possibility that it was, in fact, a slave ship carrying human cargo from East Africa to either the USA or the West Indies. An amazing and rather bizarre story. Incidentally, this is not an ‘old woman’s tale’! Its quite reliable. My grandmother would identify some of the older ladies who had actually seen the surviving Kappiries.”

71. This of course is surmise, since the President would omit to discuss the decision in his autobiography. In the event, it would seem that the Van Buren Democrats lost in this bid for re-election not because of the slavery controversy but because of the financial crisis beginning in 1837. It was the economy, stupid — when the economy is in free fall the incumbent ain’t gonna get re-elected.



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order to proceed unmolested on her piratical voyage; for there was seldom a United States cruiser to be met with, and there were, on the other hand, diplomats at Washington so jealous of the honor of the flag that they would prostitute it to crime rather than allow an English or a French cruiser in any way to interfere. Without doubt, the contention of the United States as to England's pretensions to a Right of Visit was technically correct. Nevertheless, it was clear that if the slave-trade was to be suppressed, each nation must either zealously keep her flag from fraudulent use, or, as a labor-saving device, depute to others this duty for limited places and under special circumstances. A failure of any one nation to do one of these two things meant that the efforts of all other nations were to be fruitless. The United States had invited the world to join her in denouncing the slave-trade as piracy; yet, when such a pirate was waylaid by an English vessel, the United States complained or demanded reparation. The only answer which this country for years returned to the long-continued exposures of American slave-traders and of the fraudulent use of the American flag, was a recital of cases where Great Britain had gone beyond her legal powers in her attempt to suppress the slave-trade.⁷² In the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Secretary of State Forsyth declared, in 1840, that the duty of the United States in the matter of the slave-trade "has been faithfully performed, and if the traffic still exists as a disgrace to humanity, it is to be imputed to nations with whom Her Majesty's Government has formed and maintained the most intimate connexions, and to whose Governments Great Britain has paid for the right of active intervention in order to its complete extirpation."⁷³ So zealous was Stevenson, our minister to England, in denying the Right of Search, that he boldly informed Palmerston, in 1841, "that there is no shadow of pretence for excusing, much less justifying, the exercise of any such right. That it is wholly immaterial, whether the vessels be equipped for, or actually engaged in slave traffic or not, and consequently the right to search or detain even slave vessels, must be confined to the ships or vessels of those nations with whom it may have treaties on the subject."⁷⁴ Palmerston courteously replied that he could not think that the United States seriously intended to make its flag a refuge for slave-traders;⁷⁵ and Aberdeen pertinently declared: "Now, it can scarcely be maintained by Mr. Stevenson that Great Britain should be bound to permit her own subjects, with British vessels and British capital, to carry on, before the eyes of British officers, this detestable traffic in human beings, which the law has declared to be piracy, merely because they had the audacity to commit an additional offence by fraudulently usurping the American flag."⁷⁶ Thus the dispute, even after the advent of Webster, went on for a time, involving itself in metaphysical subtleties, and apparently leading no nearer to an understanding.⁷⁷

In 1838 a fourth conference of the powers for the consideration of the slave-trade took place at London. It was attended by

72. Cf. BRITISH AND FOREIGN STATE PAPERS, from 1836 to 1842.

73. BRITISH AND FOREIGN STATE PAPERS, 1839-40, page 940.

74. HOUSE DOCUMENT, 27th Congress 1st session, No. 34, pages 5-6.

75. SENATE DOCUMENT, 29th Congress 1st session, VIII. No. 377, page 56.

76. SENATE DOCUMENT, 29th Congress 1st session, VIII. No. 377, page 72.

77. SENATE DOCUMENT, 29th Congress 1st session, VIII. No. 377, pages 133-40, etc.



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representatives of England, France, Russia, Prussia, and Austria. England laid the *projet* of a treaty before them, to which all but France assented. This so-called Quintuple Treaty, signed December 20, 1841, denounced the slave-trade as piracy, and declared that "the High Contracting Parties agree by common consent, that those of their ships of war which shall be provided with special warrants and orders ... may search every merchant-vessel belonging to any one of the High Contracting Parties which shall, on reasonable grounds, be suspected of being engaged in the traffic in slaves." All captured slavers were to be sent to their own countries for trial.⁷⁸

While the ratification of this treaty was pending, the United States minister to France, [Lewis Cass](#), addressed an official note to Guizot at the French foreign office, protesting against the institution of an international Right of Search, and rather grandiloquently warning the powers against the use of force to accomplish their ends. This extraordinary epistle, issued on the minister's own responsibility, brought a reply denying that the creation of any "new principle of international law, whereby the vessels even of those powers which have not participated in the arrangement should be subjected to the right of search," was ever intended, and affirming that no such extraordinary interpretation could be deduced from the Convention. Moreover, M. Guizot hoped that the United States, by agreeing to this treaty, would "aid, by its most sincere endeavors, in the definitive abolition of the trade."⁷⁹ Cass's theatrical protest was, consciously or unconsciously, the manifesto of that growing class in the United States who wanted no further measures taken for the suppression of the slave-trade; toward that, as toward the institution of slavery, this party favored a policy of strict *laissez-faire*.

78. BRITISH AND FOREIGN STATE PAPERS, 1841-2, page 269 ff.

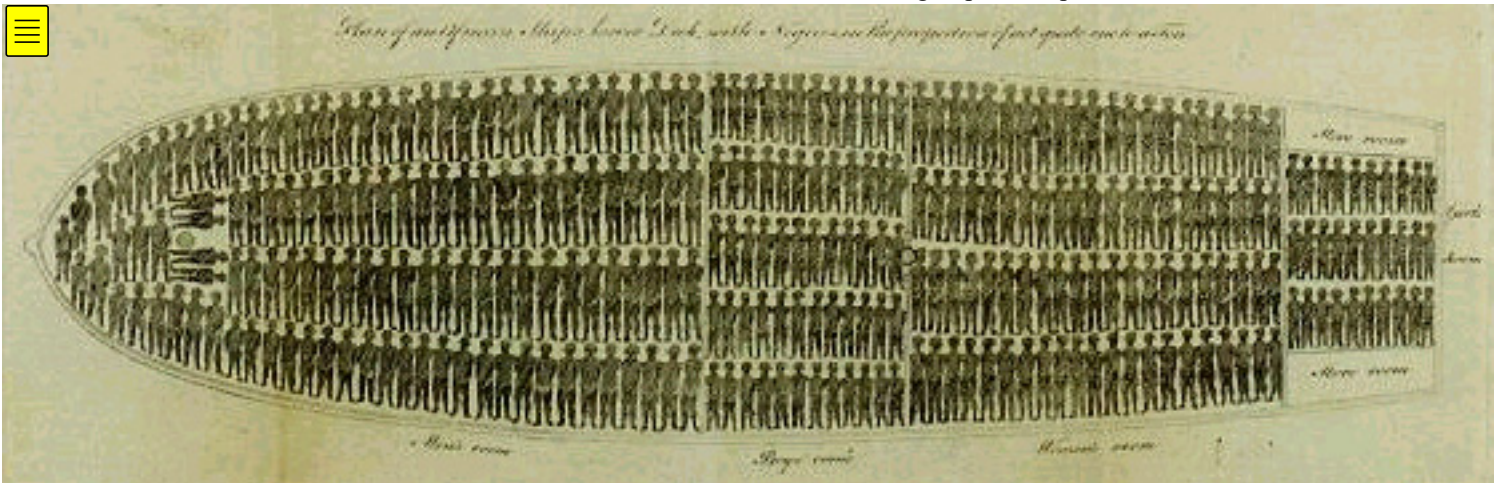
79. SENATE DOCUMENT, 29th Congress 1st session, VIII. No. 377, page 201.

SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1841

October: Some would blame a [servile insurrection](#) aboard the slave ship *Creole* while it was sailing out of Hampton VA destined for the slave auction blocks of New Orleans upon the leniency white people had exhibited toward rebellious black men during the [La Amistad](#) affair of 1839. One of the human beings in the cargo, Madison Washington, assisted by some 19 of the 138 other Virginia slaves in the cargo, managed to kill one of their white captors, and wound the captain and 1st mate of the vessel, and force the 2d mate to sail them to the Bahamas, sympathetic British territory. There was no such thing as [slavery](#) in Nassau and thus no reason to suspect these Americans of any crime. The Brits of course refused the demand of Secretary of State [Daniel Webster](#) that the mutineers be returned to the United States for punishment, instead allowing to them the freedom of their own recognizance, which they had achieved for themselves. There seemed to be no reason to hold them, any more than there would have been reason to hold white members of that slave ship's crew. However, our consul interceded and the 19 active members of the group of escapees were detained.⁸⁰



80. The upshot of this affair, in 1853, would be the determination that a naughty violation of protocols had obtained: an Anglo-American Commission would award an indemnity of \$110,330 to the United States for the compensation of American citizens who had thus been deprived of their property by a meddlesome foreign power.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1843

July: [Frederick Douglass](#) went on a lecture tour of western New York, Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania with Charles Lenox Remond and John A. Collins. While at the National Convention of Colored Persons / Convention of Colored Citizens in Buffalo NY, they would join with William Wells Brown to defeat a resolution by the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet that American slaves should be encouraged to violent revolution:



“There can be no redemption of sin

without the shedding of blood.”

In his “Address to the Slaves,” a portion of which has been several times reprinted in Black Studies anthologies during the 1960s, the Reverend Garnet called on American slaves to “Go to your lordly enslavers and tell them plainly, that **you are determined to be free**. Appeal to their sense of justice, and tell them that they have no more right to oppress you, than you have to enslave them.... Do this, and for ever after cease to toil for the heartless tyrants.... If they then commence the work of death, they, and not you, will be responsible for the consequences.... You had far better all die — **die immediately**, than live slaves.... There is not much hope of redemption without the shedding of blood.” And “Let your motto be Resistance! Resistance! Resistance! and remember that you are three millions.” According to the minutes of the convention, the eyes of those attending were “literally infused with tears” and Garnet’s conclusion was greeted with “great applause” — before [Douglass](#) began to take issue with this agenda of giving lip service to insurrection.⁸¹ He “wanted [emancipation](#) in a better way, as he expected to have it.”

SERVILE INSURRECTION

He therefore opposed printing and distribution of the address, and with the aid of Charles Lenox Remond and William Wells Brown the day was carried, by only 19 votes over 18. They would however fail to defeat

81. What Henry Highland Garnet was espousing, according to “LET YOUR MOTTO BE RESISTANCE”: THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF HENRY HIGHLAND GARNET by Earl Ofari (Boston, 1972, pages 149-50), although nominally “pacifist,” was the sort of militant mass resistance-to-evil movement which not only amounted to a full and direct rejection of the scriptural injunction “Resist not evil” incumbent upon all Christians, but also amounted to something which might well be anticipated to produce reciprocated violence. I think we may forgive this minister as the fact is that he was overreacting in response to diligent persecution, forgive, at least, to the extent of getting on the case of the slavemaster well before beginning to get on his case.

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a resolution in favor of the violence advocacy of [Gerrit Smith](#)'s Liberty Party.



I think we may forgive the minister for thus reacting, under persecution. A firebrand named [John Brown](#), who was not being persecuted but for reasons of his own needed to act as if he were, is said to have picked up on this and published and distributed the minister's sermon at his own expense for his own purposes. (However, that story may well be one of those false stories which from time to time prove compelling, as we have no idea how Brown could at this point have paid for such publication, and as no copies of any such publication have turned up in collections.)



JOHN BROWN

William Wells Brown attended not only this National Convention of Colored Citizens but also the national antislavery convention held in Buffalo NY this summer, and participated in several committees.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1846

When the 25,000 [slaves](#) of Santa Cruz staged a completely successful [servile insurrection](#), they managed somehow to secure their liberty without doing injury to a single one of the 3,000 white inhabitants of the island. (Would this in any way ease the night terrors of any white person in the slaveholding American southern states? –Not so you’d notice.)



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1848

The cornerstone was laid for a Washington Monument, a [Washington DC](#) obelisk in honor of our 1st president, a Virginia slavemaster. –I'll give you just one guess in regard to this heavy-duty construction project, as to precisely who it was who would be designated to do all the heavy lifting!

[GEORGE WASHINGTON](#)

Planning for this erection had begun in 1833. During this year in which this monument to this Virginia slavemaster was beginning to be erected, the General Assembly of Virginia was revising the state's treason statute which required death by hanging, to cover any slave who advised or conspired to rebel, or any free person who advised or conspired with a slave to rebel. Refer to VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY 1848, chapter 120, title II, chapter 12, section 5, and also to title II, chapter 2, section 5. This would be entered into the Virginia code of law in the following year, 1849, in VIRGINIA CODE, chapter 200, section 4, volume II, at 753, and in chapter 190, section 4, volume II, at 722. (This had been the charge leveled against Dr. Reuben Crandall in 1835, seeking his death by hanging for incidentally allowing another white man to peruse a pamphlet on antislavery. It would be the charge leveled against Captain John Brown in 1859, seeking his death by hanging for the raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry.)

[SERVILE INSURRECTION](#)



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

1856

September 23: From the [Rhode Island](#) diary of John Hamlin Cady (1838-1914): “A plot has been discovered in [Texas](#) among the slaves in one of the towns to rise & kill the whites. The ringleaders were hung.”

[SERVILE INSURRECTION](#)

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#).



Sept. 23. Rainy day.

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SERVILE INSURRECTION

1857

August: The 45-year-old, famous, married man Charles Dickens met and impressed an impressionable 18-year-old actress named Ellen Ternan.



Actually it was a little more complicated than that. Wilkie Collins had written a play, “The Frozen Deep,” that was a sort of public catharsis for the loss of [Sir John Franklin](#). This play featured Dickens as producer, director, and actor in a leading role, and he had modified it substantially as it had gone along. Queen Victoria herself had seen the production and announced that she had been pleased, so Dickens arranged for his Company of Strolling Players, which had consisted of his family and friends of the family, to stage performances in Manchester. At this point, however, Dickens replaced the female members of his family with professional actresses including Frances Ternan and two daughters, Maria and Ellen. Thus Dickens and Ellen performing together in “The Frozen Deep.”



Having tied up his loose ends in [New-York](#), the mercenary [Hugh Forbes](#) set out for Mount Tabor, Iowa, to set up a training school to drill [John Brown](#)’s private army in use of the stash of weapons that they had stored in that town, only to discover that the sole “Patriotic Volunteers” available for him to train were [John Brown](#) and his son [Owen Brown](#). Over and above that, Captain Brown would be entirely incapable of continuing to pay this mercenary’s \$100/month wages, plus expenses. When Forbes was briefed on Brown’s plan for [servile](#)

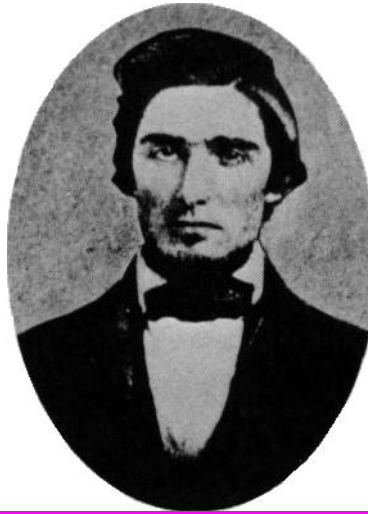
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[insurrection](#), he was shocked. Such a plan could never succeed. The only thing that could possibly work would be for white men to round up the black slaves in the northern borderlands of slavery, and drive them through the mountains to [Canada](#) — where they would become someone else's problem!

[Jeremiah Goldsmith Anderson](#) settled a mile from Fort Bain on the Little Osage in Bourbon County of the [Kansas Territory](#). He would be twice arrested by the proslavery activists, and for 10 weeks would be held at Fort Scott. He would then become a lieutenant of Captain Montgomery and would be with him in the attack on Captain Anderson's troop of the First US Cavalry. He would witness a murder on his own doorstep by border ruffians, of a Mr. Denton. He would go with [John Brown](#) on the slave raid into Missouri and remain with him thereafter.



THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

(On July 5, 1859 he would write of his determination to continue to fight for freedom: "Millions of fellow-beings require it of us; their cries for help go out to the universe daily and hourly. Whose duty is it to help them? Is it yours? Is it mine? It is every man's, but how few there are to help. But there are a few who dare to answer this call and dare to answer it in a manner that will make this land of liberty and equality shake to the centre." He would be killed by a bayonet-thrust of one of the Marines at [Harpers Ferry](#). "One of the prisoners described Anderson as turning completely over against the wall [to which he was pinned by the bayonet] in his dying agony. He lived a short time, stretched on the brick walk without, where he was subjected to savage brutalities, being kicked in body and face, while one brute of an armed farmer spat a huge quid of tobacco from his vile jaws into the mouth of the dying man, which he first forced open.")

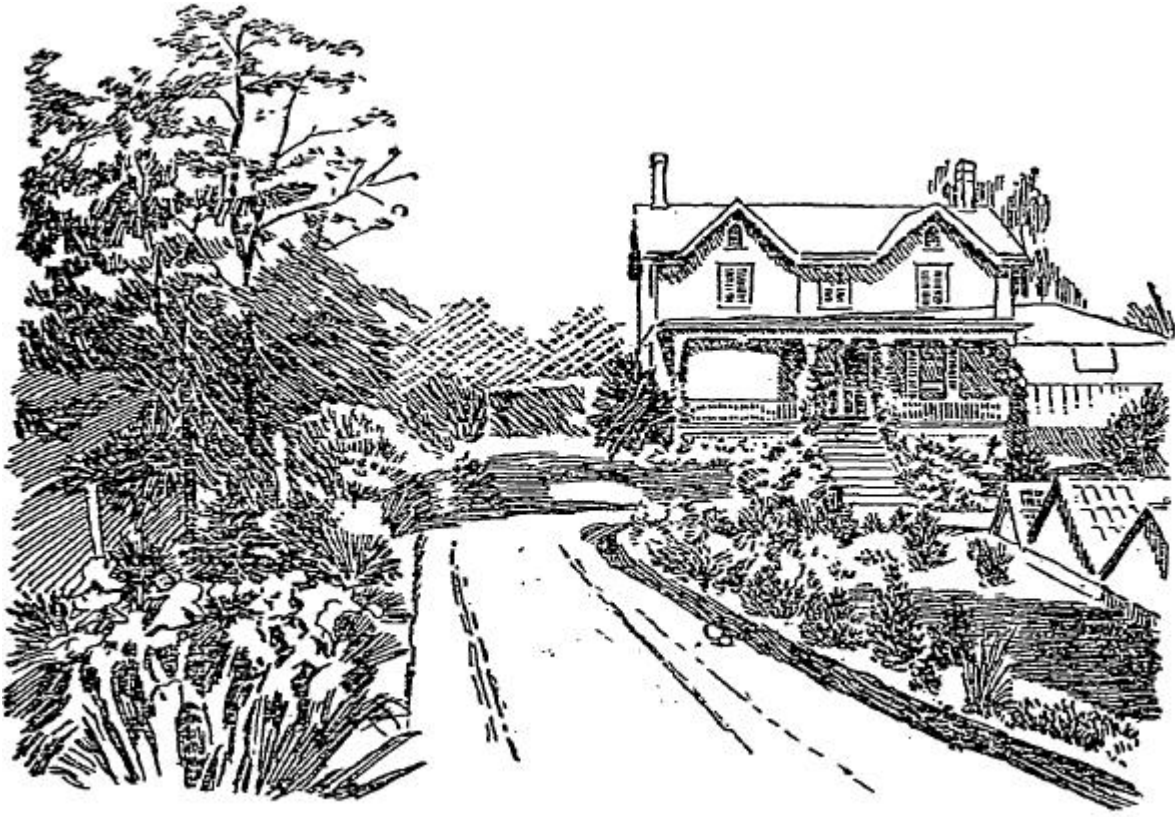
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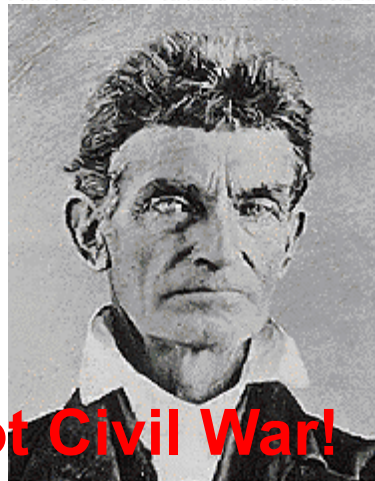
SERVILE INSURRECTION

1858

February 1, Monday: Using the name "Nelson Hawkins," [John Brown](#) took refuge in [Frederick Douglass](#)'s spare bedroom in Rochester, [New York](#), paying board for some weeks at \$3.00 per week. The two of them began to hatch plans for creating in the American South a [servile insurrection](#).



Frederick Douglass's Homestead, Rochester, N. Y.



Race War not Civil War!

SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT



[Brown](#) would write from there to the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), to whom [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) had introduced him 13 months before, saying that he was again out of Kansas but was concealing his whereabouts. Do you not know, he asked, of some parties whom you could induce to give their abolition theories a thoroughly practical shape? Could any of his Garrisonian friends, either at Boston, Worcester, or any other place, he asked, be induced to supply a little straw, if I will absolutely make bricks? He mentioned having written [George Luther Stearns](#) of Medford, and Sanborn of Concord. But he was not sure, he wrote, how deeply-dyed those folks were as Abolitionists. Stressing the need for absolute secrecy, he wrote that he desired to bring his scheme about during the following 60 days. When the Reverend displayed this letter, Sanborn confirmed that he had indeed received one of like tenor, as had Stearns, as had the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#).

[Charlotte L. Forten](#) "Rec'd a letter and papers from Mr. N [[William Cooper Nell](#)] who is very kind ... Mr. P [George W. Putnam of Lynn] and I spent the morning in writing a Parody for Mr. N on the 'Red, White and Blue.'"

[Waldo Emerson](#) checked out, from the Boston Athenæum, [Adam G. de Gurowski](#)'s AMERICA AND EUROPE (New York: D. Appleton, 1857). [Henry Thoreau](#) would make notes from this in his Indian Notebook #10.

AMERICA AND EUROPE



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

July: The Reverend [Grindall Reynolds](#) was installed as minister of the 1st Parish Church in [Concord](#).

The Alcotts moved into the Orchard House.

[Senator Jefferson Davis](#) would be spending time with his family, until October. In particular he would be spending the summer in and around Portland, Maine.

[John Brown](#) encouraged [James Redpath](#) to move from the [Kansas Territory](#) to Boston to help rally support for his plan for [servile insurrection](#). After the failure of Brown's 1859 attack on Harpers Ferry, Virginia, [James Redpath](#) would author a highly sympathetic biography of the executed abolitionist, *THE PUBLIC LIFE OF CAPT. JOHN BROWN* (1860).

September 22, Wednesday: After his education, [Francis Jackson Meriam](#) wrote [Wendell Phillips Garrison](#) asking for advice as to whether he ought to bestow his legacy upon the antislavery societies, or whether he instead ought to go participate in some sort of covert action leading toward a [servile insurrection](#).⁸²



[Henry Thoreau](#) went walking with the Reverend John Lewis Russell:



September 22: A clear cold day, wind northwest. Leave Salem for the Cape on foot. Near Beverly Bridge, crossed over that low and flat part of Salem where the first settlement was made and Arabella Stewart [*sic*] [the Lady Arbella Johnson?] I is supposed to have been buried. Soon struck off to the shore in Beverly. See the *discolor* thistle on a sandy beach, and *Phaseolus diversifolius* (three-lobed bean vine), with pretty terete long pods, some ripe, but a few flowers still. *Aster linifolius*, perhaps still in prime,—though it has a flexuous stem,—in a marsh, and lyme-grass, apparently like ours, along edge of marsh. Dined on the edge of a high rocky cliff, quite perpendicular, on the west side of entrance of Manchester Harbor.

One mile southeast of the village of Manchester, struck the beach of “musical sand,” just this side of a large, high, rocky point called Eagle Head. This is a curving sandy beach, maybe a third of a mile long by some twelve rods wide. (We also found it on a similar but shorter beach on the east side of Eagle Head.) We first perceived the sound when we scratched with our umbrella or finger swiftly and forcibly through the sand; also still louder when we struck forcibly with our heels “scuffing” along. The wet or damp sand yielded no peculiar sound, nor did that which lay loose and deep next the bank, but only the more compact and dry. The sound was not at all musical, nor was it loud. Fishermen might walk over it all their lives, as indeed they have done, without noticing it. R., *who had not heard it*, was about right when he said it was like that made by rubbing on wet glass with your fingers. I thought it as much like the sound made in waxing a table as anything. It was a squeaking sound, as of one particle rubbing on another. I should say it was merely the result of the friction of peculiarly formed and constituted particles. The surf was high and made a great noise, yet I could hear the sound made by my companion's heels two or three rods distant, and if it had been still, probably could have heard it five or six rods. We kept thence along the rocky shore to Kettle Cove, where, however, I did not find any rocks like Lewis's. Somewhere thereabouts *Scirpus maritimus*, with its great spikes now withered. In the marsh at Kettle Cove, *Gerardia maritima*, apparently in prime, four or five inches high; *Euphorbia polygonifolia*, six inches in diameter. *Spartina glabra* in the salt water of the cove.

82. He would decide to go to the [Kansas Territory](#) with some money, but because he would arrive there rather late in the process, it seems he was able to take little part in the struggle there. Still ardent to fight slavery, he would then persuade [James Redpath](#) to arrange for him to join [John Brown](#)'s force of guerrillas.



SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT

The shore, thus far, from Beverly Bridge had been a succession of bold rocky points half a mile apart, with sometimes curving sandy beaches between, or else rocks. We now kept the road to Gloucester, leaving the shore a mile or more to the right, wishing to see the magnolia swamp. This was perhaps about a mile and a half beyond Kettle Cove. After passing over a sort of height of land in the woods, we took a path to the left, which within a few rods became a corduroy road in the swamp. Within three or four rods on the west side of this, and perhaps ten or fifteen from the highroad, was the magnolia. It was two to seven or eight feet high, but distinguished by its large and still fresh green leaves, which had not begun to fall. I saw last year's shoots which had died down several feet, and probably this will be the fate of most which has grown this year. The swamp was an ordinary one, not so wet but we got about very well. The bushes of this swamp were not generally more than six feet high. There was another locality the other side of the road.

Cooked our supper in a salt marsh some two miles this side of Gloucester, in view of the town. We had cooked our tea for dinner with dead bayberry bushes; now we used the chips and bark which the tide had deposited in little parcels on the marsh, having carried water in our dippers from a brook, a quarter of a mile. There was a large patch of samphire turned a bright crimson, very conspicuous, near by on the flat marsh, the more conspicuous because large and in the midst of the liquid green of the marsh. We sat on some stones which we obtained flat in the marsh till starlight.

I had seen in this day's walk an abundance of *Aster cordifolius* (but no *A. undulatus*); also saw *A. corymbosus*, which is a handsome white wood aster; and, very common, what I called *A. longifolius*, with shorter thick, clasping leaves and growing in drier ground than ours, methinks; also, all along the road, the up-country hard, small, mulberry-shaped high blackberry, and many still holding on. This may be due to the cool air of the Cape. They were quite sweet and good. *Vide* a specimen. The foliage had but just fairly begun to change. Put up in Gloucester.

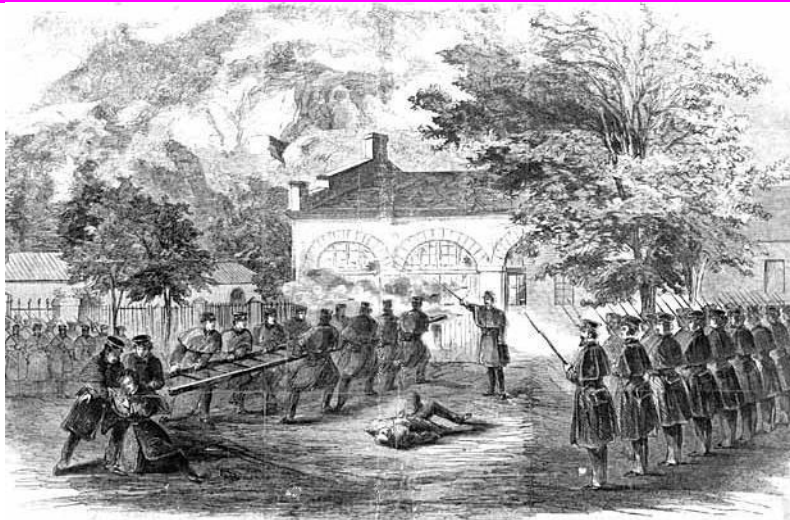
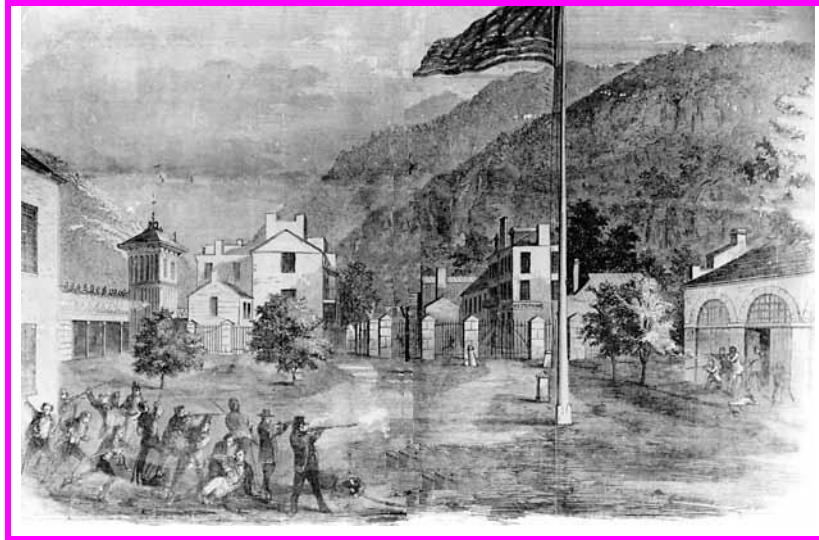
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1859

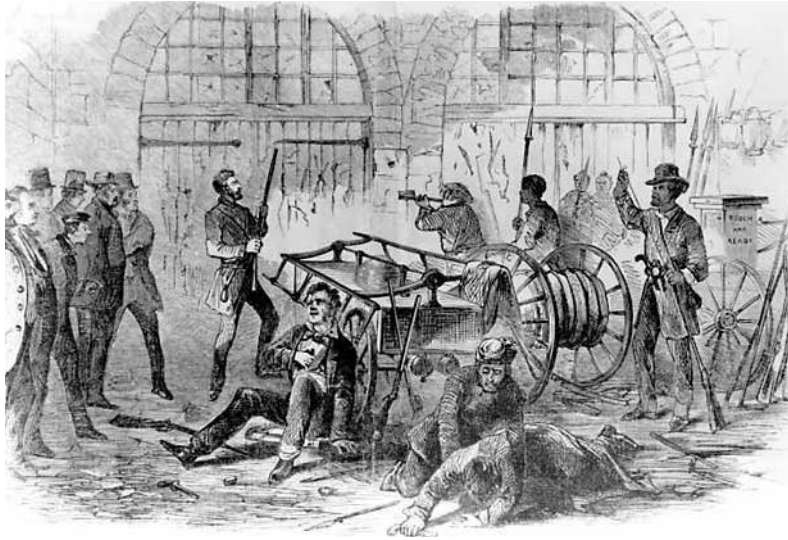
October 18, Tuesday: At break of day, [John Brown](#) surrendered to the 86 US Marines under the command of 1st Lieutenant Israel Green, USMC, and Lieutenant-Colonel [Robert E. Lee](#), USA. He had sent his son [Watson Brown](#) out to parley under a white flag and the son had been gut-shot by the citizens of [Harpers Ferry](#).



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He had managed to crawl back to the shelter of the engine house and live on, groaning, his head cradled in [Edwin Coppoc](#)'s lap, but would soon expire.



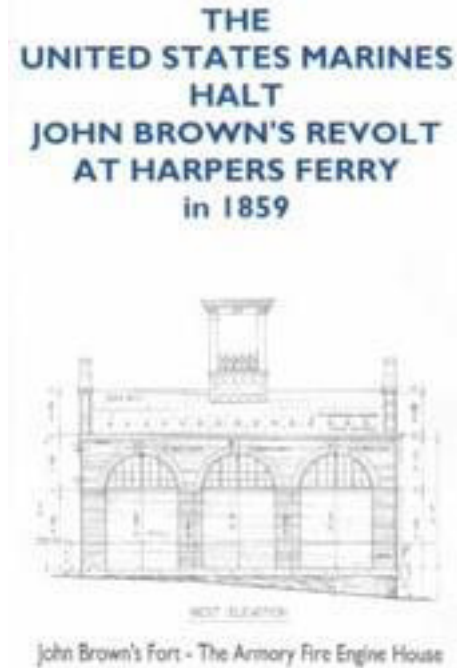
(His widow Isabella M. Thompson Brown would remarry with his brother [Salmon Brown](#).)

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Eventually, the USMC would be putting out an official historical pamphlet about this capture:



The New-York Herald's article on this day cut straight to the primal white fear, of an "Extensive Negro

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SERVILE INSURRECTION

Conspiracy in Virginia and [Maryland](#):

FEARFUL AND EXCITING INTELLIGENCE.

NEGRO INSURRECTION AT HARPER'S FERRY.

Extensive Negro Conspiracy in Virginia and Maryland.

Seizure of the United States Arsenal by the Insurrectionists.

Arms Taken and Sent into the Interior.

The Bridge Fortified and Defended by Cannon.

Trains Fired into and Stopped---Several Persons Killed---Telegraph Wires Cut---Contributions Levied on the Citizens.

Troops Despatched Against the Insurgents from Washington and Baltimore,

&c.,

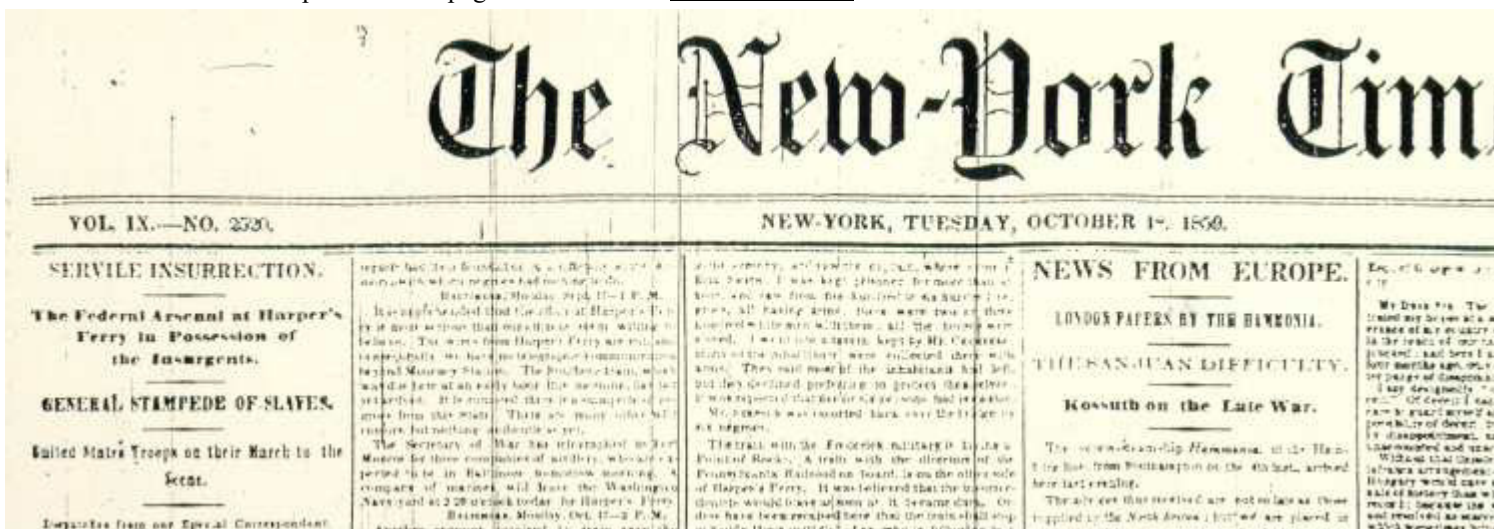
&c.,

&c.

SLAVE REVOLT



Lest we suppose this “[servile insurrection](#)” thingie to have been a phenomenon confined to the tabloid press, here is the comparison front-page headline of the [New-York Times](#):



The news of the raid on the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#) was in all newspapers by this day's edition.

Town residents George Mauzy and Mary Mauzy wrote again to their daughter Eugenia Mauzy Burton and son-



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in-law James H. Burton, who were then living in England (Burton had been a machinist, foreman, and Acting Master Armorer at the Harpers Ferry Armory between 1844-1854):

To Eugenia Burton, Enfield, England

October 18, 1859

This has been one of the saddest days that Harper's Ferry ever experienced. This morning, when the armorers went to the shops to go to work, lo and behold, the shops had been taken possession of by a set of abolitionists and the doors were guarded by Negroes with rifles. —George Mauzy

At his capture, a document in [Captain John Brown](#)'s handwriting was found in his clothing. The document listed the Chatham, Canada signatories to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States."

[Henry Thoreau](#) was written a commercial letter:

*Cambridge Aug 18
Mr Thoreau
Dear Sir
Inclosed
please find \$15 00 for
which send us 10 #s
Blacklead by return of
express—directed as
usual
Yours truly
Welch, Bigelow, &C^o
Aug 18.*

SERVILE INSURRECTION

SLAVE REVOLT



October 18. Rains till 3 P. M., but is warmer.

P. M.—To Assabet, front of Tarbell's.

Going by Dennis Swamp on railroad, the sour scent of decaying ferns is now very strong there. *Rhus venenata* is bare, and maples and some other shrubs, and more are very thin-leaved, as alder and birches, so that the swamp, with so many fallen leaves and migrating sparrows, etc., flitting through it, has a very late look.

For falling, put the canoe birch with the small white. The beach plum is almost quite bare. The leaves of a chinquapin oak have not fallen. The long, curved, yellowish buds of the *Salix discolor* begin to show, the leaves falling; even the down has peeped out from under some.

In the ditch along the west side of Dennis Swamp I see half a dozen yellow-spot turtles moving about. Probably they are preparing to go into winter quarters.

I see one of the smaller thrushes to-day.

Saw a tree-toad on the ground in a sandy wood-path. It did not offer to hop away, may have been chilled by the rain (?). It is marked on the back with black, somewhat in the form of the *hylodes*.

Why can we not oftener refresh one another with original thoughts? If the fragrance of the *dicksonia* fern is so grateful and suggestive to us, how much more refreshing and encouraging—re-creating—would be fresh and fragrant thoughts communicated to us fresh from a man's experience and life! I want none of his pity, nor sympathy, in the common sense, but that he should emit and communicate to me his essential fragrance, that he should not be forever repenting and going to church (when not otherwise sinning), but, as it were, going a-huckleberrying in the fields of thought, and enrich all the world with his visions and his joys.

Why do you flee so soon, sir, to the theatres, lecture-rooms, and museums of the city? If you will stay here awhile I will promise you strange sights. You shall walk on water; all these brooks and rivers and ponds shall be your highway. You shall see the whole earth covered a foot or more deep with purest white crystals, in which you slump or over which you glide, and all the trees and stubble glittering in icy armor.



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

December: An anonymous missive to Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) of Virginia, undated, presumably sometime during December:



Gov. Wise

Hon Sir

As Virginia has received from her Sister State Pennsylvania a peace offering flag, it is no more than fair that another sister should be presented in her peculiar way, please therefore accept the accompanying appropriate design.

The flag pictured here is the "New England Black Republican, Abolition Rule or Ruin, Disunion Flag" destined to take the place of the present Glorious Eagle, Stars & Stripes Flag of this Great Republic and that no mistake may occur as to the Emblems a description is added.

In lieu of the usual spear on the head of the flag & staff (which is in form of a cross) a Gallows with a John Brown embellishment is substituted. A wooden Ham & 32 wooden Nutmegs on a Blood red field take the place of the Eagle and stars. The ballance of the flag being black is quite suggestive of the general intention of the Party of which this is the Standard

REPUBLICAN PARTY

In this timeframe Mrs. [Rebecca B. Spring](#) not only wrote to but, twice, with her son, visited Captain [John Brown](#) in prison. Her expenses to provide Captain Brown and [Aaron D. Stevens](#) with flowers, books, clothing, medicine, and food during their incarceration prior to execution amounted to some \$400, approximately one year's income for a day laborer. She even sent them music. She would inform a newspaper reporter that what he had said to her was "I do not think I can better serve the cause I love so much, than to die for it!"

The Republicans were being referred to as the Black Republicans, in order to indicate the general sense of the

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country, that these were people who harbored an unsavory prejudice in favor of the unworthy, blacks and Irish:



The long autobiographical letter which [John Brown](#) had written on July 15, 1857 [→](#) to [George Luther Stearns](#) was made available to [Waldo Emerson](#), who would use the allegations and much of their phrasing in his speech of January 6, 1860 [→](#) in Salem on the history of Brown's abolitionism.


[AUTOBIOGRAPHY](#)



SLAVE REVOLT

SERVILE INSURRECTION

According to Seymour Drescher's "[Servile Insurrection](#) and John Brown's Body in Europe":

 The most famous and graphic European image to appear in the wake of the raid on Harper's Ferry was an engraving, entitled *John Brown*. Against a dark landscape and a dull, cloudy sky a small human figure hangs from a gallows. The body's features are almost completely blanketed in shadow. From the heavens alone come shafts of light, breaking through the dreary obscurity to fall upon the gallows and the figure. Beneath this bleak illustration initially appeared the words: "*Pro Christo-Sicut Christus, John Brown, - Charleston. Designed by Victor Hugo.*"

The engraving was the frontispiece to the most widely publicized commentary on [John Brown](#) to reach America from across the Atlantic. Victor Hugo's letter on John Brown, originally written in early December 1859, was reprinted in newspapers and pamphlets on both sides of the Atlantic and was viewed by American abolitionists as a document that "will be read by millions with thrilling emotions." In it, France's most famous contemporary writer declared in exclamatory prose that the whole civilized world (namely, England, France, and Germany) was witnessing with horror a travesty of justice — "not in Turkey, but in America!" "The champion of Christ ... slaughtered by the American Republic," "the assassination of Emancipation by Liberty," ... "something more terrible than Cain slaying Abel ... Washington slaying [Spartacus](#)!" Hugo had written the letter as an impassioned public plea to save Brown from execution. The engraving was appended to later publications of the letter to portray Brown as a crucified Christian martyr and slave emancipator, with the gibbet as his cross.

I don't know when he wrote this, but [Bronson Alcott](#) would write a "Sonnet XXIV, Addressed to John Brown, Harper's Ferry":

Bold Saint, thou firm believer in the Cross,
Again made glorious by self-sacrifice,—
Love's free atonement given without love's loss,—
That martyrdom to thee was lighter pain,
Since thus a race its liberties should gain;
Flash its sure consequence in Slavery's eyes
When, 'scaping sabre's clash and battle's smoke,
She felt the justice of thy master-stroke:
Peaceful prosperity around us lies,
Freedom with loyalty thy valor gave;
Whilst thou, no felon doomed, for gallows fit,
O Patriot true! O Christian meek and brave!
Throned in the martyrs' seat henceforth shalt sit;
Prophet of God! Messiah of the Slave!

I don't know when she wrote this, but [Louisa May Alcott](#) would write a poem "With a Rose, That Bloomed on the Day of John Brown's Martyrdom":

In the long silence of the night,
Nature's benignant power
Woke aspirations for the light
Within the folded flower.
Its presence and the gracious day
Made summer in the room.
But woman's eyes shed tender dew
On the little rose in bloom.

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Picton 4/4/90
1869

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Then blossomed forth a grander flower,
In the wilderness of wrong.
Untouched by Slavery's bitter frost,
A soul devout and strong.
God-watched, that century plant uprose,
Far shining through the gloom.
Filling a nation with the breath
Of a noble life in bloom.

A life so powerful in its truth,
A nature so complete;
It conquered ruler, judge and priest,
And held them at its feet.
Death seemed proud to take a soul
So beautifully given,
And the gallows only proved to him
A stepping-stone to heaven.

Each cheerful word, each valiant act,
So simple, so sublime,
Spoke to us through the reverent hush
Which sanctified that time.
That moment when the brave old man
Went so serenely forth
With footsteps whose unfaltering tread
Reëchoed through the North.

The sword he wielded for the right
Turns to a victor's palm;
His memory sounds forever more,
A spirit-stirring psalm.
No breath of shame can touch his shield,
Nor ages dim its shine;
Living, he made life beautiful,—
Dying, made death divine.

No monument of quarried stone,
No eloquence of speech
Can grave the lessons on the land
His martyrdom will teach.
No eulogy like his own words,
With hero-spirit rife,
"I truly serve the cause I love,
By yielding up my life."



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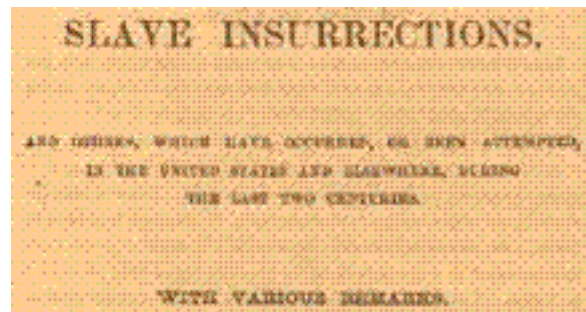
SLAVE REVOLT

1860

AN ACCOUNT OF SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL SLAVE INSURRECTIONS, AND OTHERS, WHICH HAVE OCCURRED, OR BEEN ATTEMPTED, IN THE UNITED STATES AND ELSEWHERE, DURING THE LAST TWO CENTURIES. WITH VARIOUS REMARKS. COLLECTED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES BY JOSHUA COFFIN (NY: The American Anti-slavery Society).

READ THE FULL TEXT

The author of this tract argued that the existence of slavery in the United States of America constituted a real threat to public peace and security. [Joshua Coffin](#) described slave resistance through [servile insurrections](#) of large and of small scale in the North and South, including work slowdowns, poisonings, arsons, and murders. He discussed many mutinies, including one on a [Rhode Island](#) slaver in which captives near Cape Coast Castle (in what is now Ghana) rose and “murdered the captain and all the crew except the two mates, who swam ashore.”



“I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.”

— [W.H. Auden](#), [September 1, 1939](#)



July 8, Sunday: A fire destroyed much of the business district of Dallas, Texas. A plot would develop, that would use this conflagration to create a general panic in regard to [servile insurrection](#) and thus cause states to secede from the federal union. Across the South said conspiracy would spark white panic in regard to black insurrection — and states would in fact secede.

“TEXAS TERROR”

Although [Henry Thoreau](#) had sprained his thumb, making writing difficult, when his mother [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) suggested this, he was able to manage a letter to [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#):

Concord July 8 1860

Dear Sophia,

Mother reminds me that I must write to you, if only a few lines, though I have sprained my thumb so that it is questionable whether I can write legibly, if at all. I can't bear on much. What is worse, I believe that I have sprained by brain too — ie it sympathises with my thumb. But there is no excuse, I suppose, for writing a letter in such



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a case, is, like sending a newspaper, only a hint to let you know that "all is well" — but my thumb.

I hope that you begin to derive some benefit from that more mountainous air which you are breathing Have you had a distinct view of the Franconia Notch mts (blue peaks in the N horizon)? which I told you that you could get from the road in Campton, & probably from some other points nearer. Such a view of the mts is more memorable than any other.

Have you been to Squam Lake, or overlooked it — I should think that you could easily make an excursion to some mt in that direction from which you could see the lake & the mts generally.

Is there no friend of N.P. Rogers who can tell you where the "lions" are.

Of course I didnt go to North Elba, but I sent some reminiscences of last fall

I hear that John Brown jr has just come to Boston for a few days. Mr Sanborn's case, it is said, will come on after some murder cases have been disposed of — here.

I have just been invited, formally, to be present at the annual picnic of Theodore Parker's Society (that was) at Waverly next Wednesday, & to make some remarks — But this is wholly out of my line — I do not go to pic-nics even in Concord you know —

Mother & Aunt Sophia rode to Acton with me yesterday. I suppose that you have heard that Mr Hawthorn has come home. I went to meet him the other evening & found that he had not altered except that he was looking pretty brown after his voyage He is as simple & child-like as ever.

I believe that I have fairly scared the kittens away at last, by my pretended fierceness — which was humane surely.

& now I will consider my thumb — & your eyes

Henry



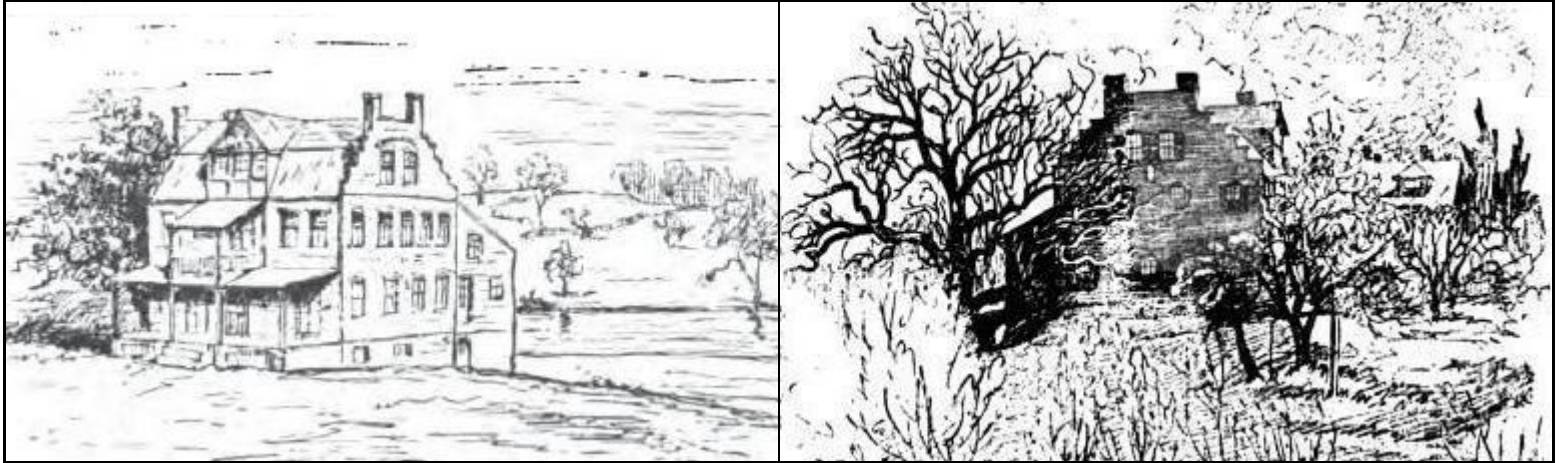
July 8. Yesterday was quite hazy, with an east wind. This morning there is a cold mist, which soon becomes rain,—at 2.30 P. M. The thermometer is at 66°, and some sit by fires.

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1909

October 17, Sunday: It was the 50th anniversary of [John Brown](#)'s raid on [Harpers Ferry](#), and the survivors of that scheme met in the riverside brick mansion of [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), on Elm Street in Concord.



When the 77-year-old Sanborn took [Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#)'s elbow to lead his 86-year-old friend into the sitting room, the Colonel pulled his arm away — despite the fact that the Reverend was now walking by use of a cane. In the sitting room, a circle of six chairs had been set out, one chair for each of the original [Secret "Six"](#): The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), [Gerrit Smith](#), [George Luther Stearns](#), [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#), [Colonel Higginson](#), and [Sanborn](#), despite the fact that Parker, Smith, Stearns, and Howe had by this point deceased. The chair for Dr. Howe was occupied by 90-year-old [Julia Ward Howe](#), who remained seated when the others entered, with a shawl around her shoulders. Julia had her ear trumpet with her so that she would not need to miss any of the conversation. Also in the room was a young reporter, Katherine Mayo, who had been detailed to take copious notes by a grandson of [William Lloyd Garrison](#), the author Oswald Garrison Villard. Villard was then wrapping up work on a study of Captain Brown that hopefully would be an improvement on Sanborn's botched 1885 attempt at a biography. [Colonel Higginson](#) needed to make certain that Miss Mayo clearly understood, so that she could convey this information to Villard, that he and the other members of this 6-member finance committee had been entirely aware of [John Brown](#)'s intent to incite a slave rebellion in Virginia, and that they'd been quite as prepared that Brown's raid would turn into a disaster for him and his little band as they had been prepared that it might prove against all odds to be a success.

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2005

January 1, Saturday: My friend Srinivas Aravamundan edited a new scholarly edition of William Earle Junior's 1800 OBI; OR, THE HISTORY OF [THREEFINGERED JACK](#). IN A SERIES OF LETTERS FROM A RESIDENT IN JAMAICA TO HIS FRIEND IN ENGLAND).



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RACE SLAVERY

THREEFINGERED JACK

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



SLAVE REVOLT

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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: November 26, 2016



SLAVE REVOLT

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ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.



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Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.