

Resistance to Slavery

Insurrection

Underground Railroad

Abolitionist Movement

SLAVE RESISTANCE

- Africans enslaved in North America have always demonstrated resistance to their enslavement.

SLAVE REBELLION

- Dating back to 1663, a slave conspiracy for rebellion was recorded.

REBELLION CAUSES FEAR

A REVOLUTION IN HAITI IN 1792,
PROVIDED PROOF THAT SLAVES WERE
NOT ONLY READY AND ABLE TO REVOLT,
BUT ALSO THAT A REVOLUTION BY THE
SLAVE POPULATION COULD SUCCEED.

*Fear was heightened by the fiery
speeches of abolitionists, and the
abolitionist press increased the fear, as
their literature made its way to the South.*

Major Slave Rebellions occurred in the United States

Gabriel Prosser

- The first major slave revolt in the south was led by a 24 year old slave named Gabriel Prosser.
- In 1800, he organized over a thousand slaves to take the city of Richmond, Virginia.
- Gabriel Prosser was deeply Christian and was fired by religious indignation against slavery. He was betrayed.
- The state Militia attacked him and he and his followers were hanged. This revolt terrified slave-owners throughout the south.

Denmark Vesey

- Using his craft to earn the money, Denmark Vesey purchased his freedom and settled down in Charleston, South Carolina, as a carpenter.



- In 1821, he organized a slave revolt in Charleston, and carried it out in 1822.
- Vesey was also betrayed. He and his co-leaders were hung, but only one confessed.

Nat Turner



In 1831, the most important and best-documented slave insurrection in Southern history took place when Nat Turner, son of an African-born slave mother in Southampton County, Virginia, led an uprising of sixty or seventy slaves.

Turner believed he was chosen by God to lead his people out of slavery.



He grew up sharing his mother's view of slavery. Nat had been taught to read by his master's son. Encouraged by his parents he began to believe that God had chosen him.

In August 1831, Turner and about seven other slaves killed Nat's master and his family, and the rebellion was launched.

- **About 50 whites were killed**
- **Only about 75 slaves joined the rebellion**
- **Over 3000 members of the state militia were sent to deal with Turner's rebellion, and they were soon defeated.**

**October 1831,
Nat Turner was captured.**

Retaliation by the South

- 55 executed, many more banished, a few acquitted.
- State reimbursed slaveholders for their slaves.
- About 200 blacks, many of whom had nothing to do with the rebellion were murdered by mobs.
- Slaves as far away as North Carolina were accused, tried and executed.

This insurrection shocked the South and many slave states began to pass laws for policing their slaves. They began to believe that the revolt was connected to abolitionists but could not prove it. Southerners never quite recovered from the fear of another slave insurrections despite reassurances that there was nothing to fear.

INSURRECTION

*“Extensive Negro Conspiracy
in Virginia and Maryland”*

News of John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry stunned northerners and southerners alike. Adding to the hysteria were early newspaper reports with their sensational headlines.

John Brown was a committed abolitionist who for many years had worked for the freedom of Blacks on the Underground Railroad out of Missouri.

In 1855, he followed his five sons to the Kansas territory.



In Kansas, he became the leader of anti-slavery guerillas and fought a pro-slavery attack against the antislavery town of Lawrence.

John Brown Supporters

Brown returned to the east and began to think more seriously about his plan for a war in Virginia against slavery. He sought money to fund an "army" he would lead. He gained the financial support and encouragement of several well known northern abolitionists.



John Brown ventured to Chatham, West Ontario, knowing it was well populated with former enslaved black Americans who had escaped. Here he convened a convention of black and white delegates to oppose slavery.

Brown had come to Chatham to plan an even stronger attack on the system of slavery. His plan was to make a direct physical assault on slave holders and to liberate their slaves

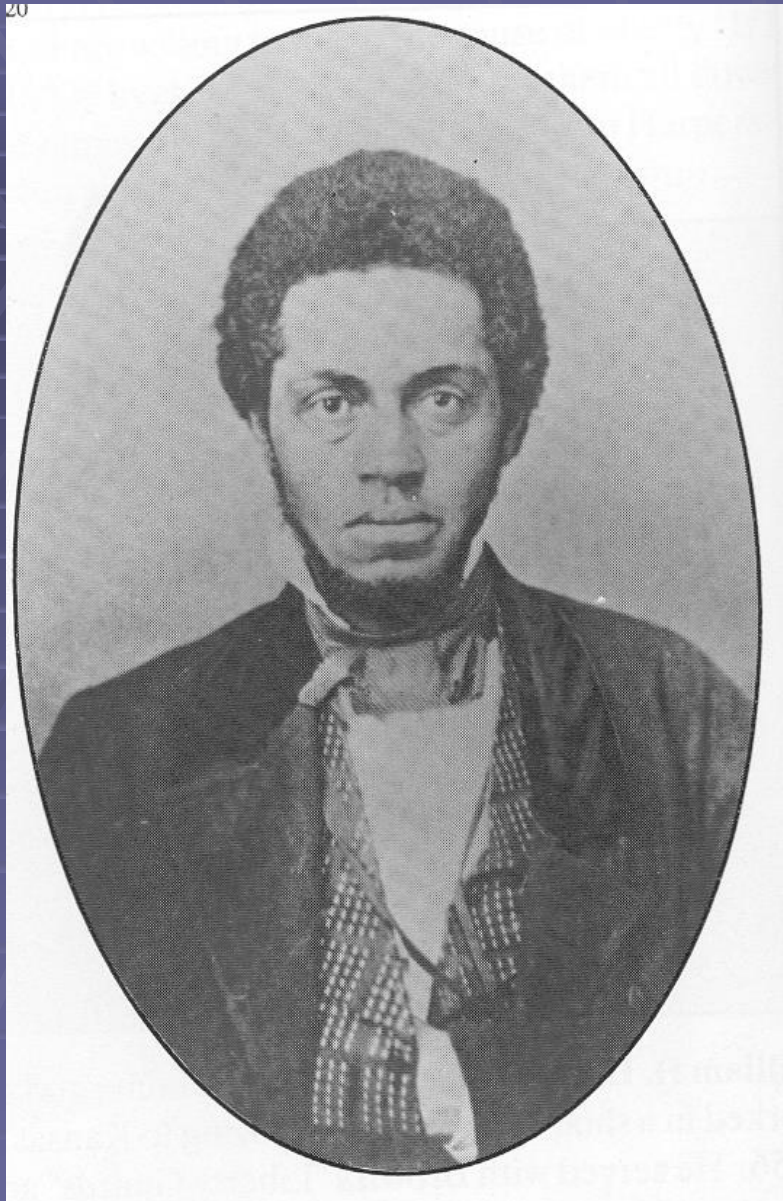
In May 1858, he held a secret convention in Chatham where he formed an association that received strong support from the Black population.

Brown comes to Buxton

- He formed a similar association in Buxton. While there, Brown found one man in particular “roughing it in the bush”, who strongly supported his cause. Brown, stating that he would have to go a long way to find an equal to this man, made plans to give financial support to the man so he could support his wife and their five small children and join Brown’s cause.

The plan ultimately ended in failure

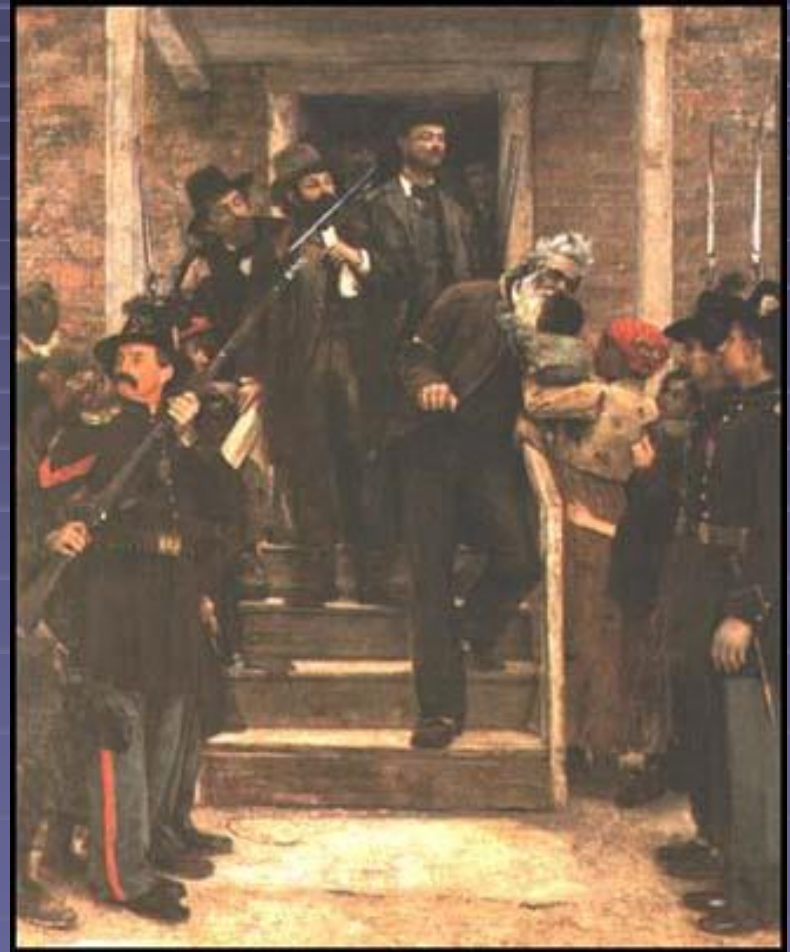
- When John Brown made his raid on Harper's Ferry, an arsenal in Virginia, neither this man nor any other Buxton men were present. William King, though he sympathized with Brown's cause opposed the plan and advised the men of Buxton not to become involved. A Buxton man, Robert Van Vranken was later investigated by the United States Senate committee..



Osborn Anderson a printer at the *Provincial Freeman* office was the only person from Chatham to join John Brown in his plan. At the Harper's Ferry raid, he was the only Black man in the raiding party to escape. He later wrote his account of the raid.

John Brown Captured

- Brown, his sons and supporters were captured, jailed and tried.
- Before hearing his sentence, Brown was allowed to make an address to the court.

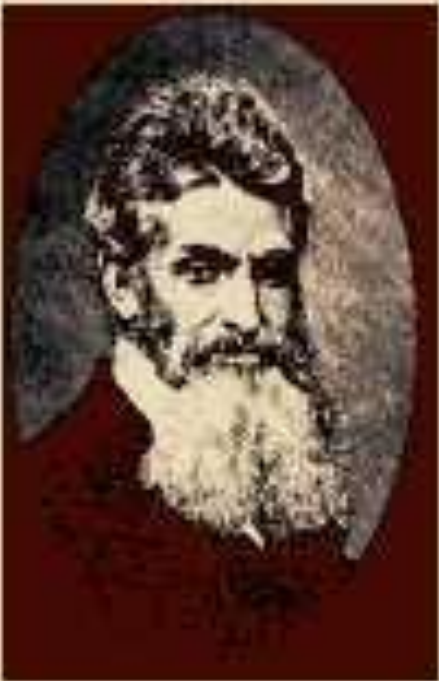


Address of John Brown to the Virginia Court at Charles Town, Virginia on November 2, 1859.

I have, may it please the court, a few words to say. In the first place, I deny everything but what I have all along admitted, -- the design on my part to free slaves. I intended certainly to have made a clean thing of that matter, as I did last winter, when I went into Missouri and took slaves without the snapping of a gun on either side, moved them through the country, and finally left them in Canada. I designed to do the same thing again, on a larger scale. That was all I intended. I never did intend murder, or treason, or the destruction of property, or to excite or incite slaves to rebellion, or to make insurrection.

.....The court acknowledges, as I suppose, the validity of the law of God. I see a book kissed here which I suppose to be the Bible, or at least the New Testament. That teaches me that all things whatsoever I would that men should do to me, I should do even so to them. It teaches me further to "remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them." I endeavored to act up to that instruction. I say, I am too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done -- as I have always freely admitted I have done -- in behalf of His despised poor, was not wrong, but right. Now if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments. -- I submit; so let it be done!

John Brown was hanged on December 2, 1859.



Although the raid failed, his actions polarized slavery and anti-slavery forces, influencing the 1860 presidential election. To the slave owner, Brown represented a murderer, a northerner interfering in southern issues. Among anti-slavery supporters he was admired for his sacrifice and became a martyr for the cause.

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 Per-
sons Killed---Telegraph Wires Cut---
Contributions Levied on the Citizens.

Troops Despatched Against the Insurgents
from Washington and Baltimore,

Ac.

Ac.

Ac.

The raid prompted the *Richmond Enquirer* to state that, “the invasion has advanced the cause of disunion more than any other event that has happened since the formation of our government”.

The Christiana Resistance

In 1850, the infamous “Fugitive Slave Law” was passed. This law was designed to pacify the Southern slave-owners by making it illegal for anyone to assist in the escape or concealment of run-away slaves. The penalty was a fine of \$1000.00 dollars or 6 months in jail. Also, United States Marshals or special commissioners could demand that any citizen be ordered to assist in the capture of any runaway or be tried for treason. An added enticement with this law was that Judges or Justices of the Peace were paid \$5.00 if they found a Black to be a free person and \$10.00 if they found him or her to be a fugitive. Blacks were not allowed to testify in their own defense. As a result, Blacks were kidnapped from the streets or from their own homes – some may have been free for several generations!

In September 1851, a slaveholder accompanied by a United States Marshall and a posse of 15 to 20 men, rode into Christiana, Pennsylvania . They had come to recapture two slaves, but they ran into the Negro Vigilance Committee at the home of a free black –William Parker, who was hiding the runaways in his home.

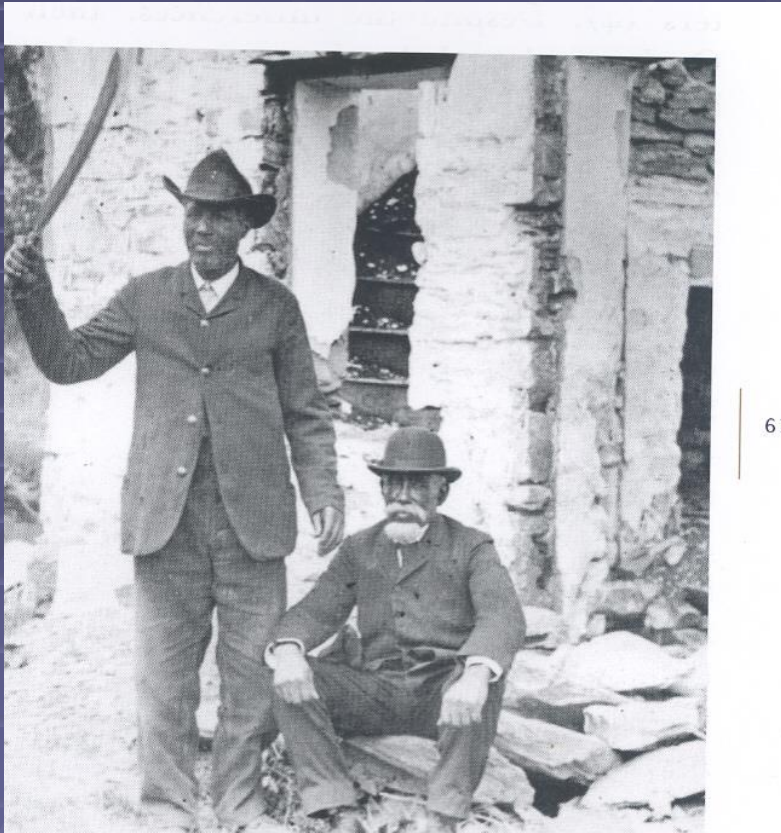


Having been warned by that slave-catchers were coming, Parker's party of five, and two fugitives slept in the Parker home and decided to resist.

Just before dawn the cry went out that “the kidnappers are coming.” The posse demanded the slaves. When asked to leave, Gorsuch, the slave owner replied that he would “have breakfast in hell, or have his slaves.” When the smoke cleared, Gorsuch lay dead and his supporters were in hiding.

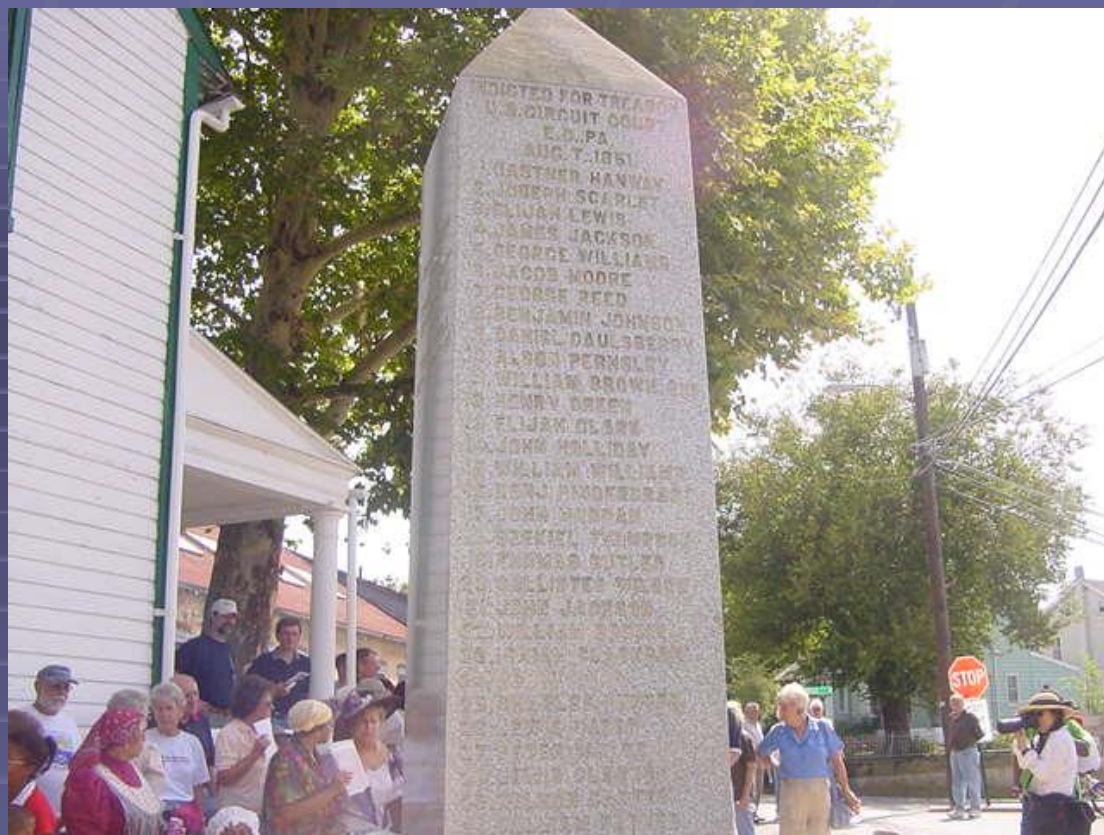


The Parker House in Christiana, Pennsylvania was the site of the Christiana Resistance.



Peter Woods aged eighty later said *“The morning of the riot I got there about 7 or 8 o’clock. I met some of them coming out of the lane, and others were on a run from the house. There were about 60 of our fellows chasing them. The shooting was all over. Gorsuch had been killed before I got there. The Gorsuch party was riding away as fast as they could.”*

William Parker,
Abraham Johnston
and Alexander
Pinckney escaped.
They were aided by
the UGRR and came
to Buxton where they
settled and purchased
farms. Eliza Parker
and Hannah Pinckney
later joined them.



Obelisk In Christiana

Erected in 1911 to commemorate the
Resistance. This view shows the list of
men indicted for treason.

There were many other instances of slave rescues.



**Both on the road
and in the courthouse.**

Resistances to slavery did not end until slavery was totally abolished in 1865 following the Civil War.

