



0. REBELLION - Story Preface

1. SLAVES IN THE NEW WORLD

2. KIDNAPPED AFRICANS

3. PASSAGE TO THE NEW WORLD

4. FREEDOM - BUT NOT FOR SLAVES

5. POWERS OF THE MIND

6. REBELLION

7. ESCAPE

8. TRIPS ON THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

9. TRICKS AND DETERMINATION

10. FUGITIVE SLAVE LAWS

11. PUNISHMENT for HELPING RUNAWAYS

12. FORMER SLAVES BECOME ABOLITIONISTS

13. BUYING AND SELLING PEOPLE

14. A TERRIBLE TIME

15. PLANTATION LIFE

16. SPLIT-UP FAMILIES

17. LAST FREE LABOR

18. WHAT WAS IT LIKE?

19. HUMAN SPIRIT PREVAILS

Nat Turner, who led a slave rebellion in 1831, was discovered by Benjamin Phipps, as illustrated in this image by William Henry Shelton. Among other places, Shelton's wood-engraving appears at page 321 of *A Popular History of the United States* (published in 1882). Online via Wikimedia Commons.

In 1831, Nat Turner led a slave rebellion in Southampton, Virginia. Blacks killed whites as they fought for freedom.

Although the uprising was only one of about 250 rebellions documented during America's slave years, many historians consider it the most important. Thirty years later, the country was at war with itself.

In assessing what caused the revolt, John Floyd (the governor of Virginia) wrote to James Hamilton (the governor of South Carolina) blaming Christians in the North, especially "peddlers" and "traders."

We read these words from the first page of Floyd's letter:

The course has been by no means a direct one - they began first, by making them religious - their conversations were of that character - telling the blacks God was no respecter of persons - the black man was as good as the white - that all men were born free and equal - that they cannot serve two masters - that the white people rebelled against England to obtain freedom, so have the blacks a right to do so.

One could fairly ask this question: Doesn't the second fight for freedom (by American slaves) naturally follow from the first (by American colonists)?

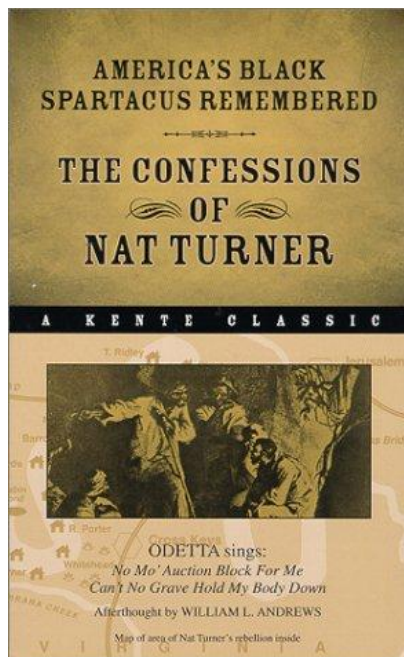
One could fairly make this observation: Given the cruelty many slaves endured, why would they not rebel?

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/REBELLION-Slave-Voices)

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The Confessions of Nat Turner

Image online, courtesy amazon.com website.

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