

# Slave resistance essay examples

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First slaves appeared on the American coast in the beginning of the 17th century. Thus, the first resistance acts began almost at the same time. According to Knight (2006), “ slaves ‘ naturally’ resisted their enslavement because slavery was fundamentally unnatural” (p. 2066). The resistance took place in various forms and was of different level of effectiveness. But each expression of it committed either by groups or by individuals should be considered as an act of rebellion against the whole system of slavery. It shows that slaves did not accept the situation and did not count themselves as victims of the slavery (“ Slave resistance at work”, n. d).

Firstly, the most common type of disobedience to the existing order was so-called “ Day-to-day resistance”. It included breaking tools needed to work on the plantations and other objects where slaves were used, pretending of being ill and different forms of arson and sabotage (“ Slave resistance and revolts”, 2011).

Another form of resistance was running away. In many cases, slaves did not run away too far and did it without intention of permanent leaving the master’s house. Such actions were aimed at negotiation’s try and receiving some economical bargain or partial freedom. In such a way slaves tried to persuade their master to change the pace of work, to extend the free time hours, to get any reward for their work and to be free to arrange marriages, burials and other religious ceremonies without being supervised. However, some refugees tried to escape slavery on the permanent basis. They went to the swamps or migrate to other states (“ Slave resistance and revolts”, 2011).

Thirdly, one of the most common ways of resistance was theft. Slaves stole fruit, vegetables, spirits and money from their owners. One of the reasons for such behavior was that nutrition of the enslaved workers did not meet their requirements, in other words, they were starving and did not have another choice.

The fourth widely known way of resistance is an organized rebellion. It is the most cruel and bloody way to rise against the system. Such actions took place from the early 18th century throughout the whole America, both Northern and Southern. The rebellions more often happened in the places, where the black population exceeded the whites and therefore, blacks felt themselves more powerful and decisive to start an open disobedience action.

Apart from this popular means, enslaved Africans used many others. For example, women terminated their pregnancies or killed their new-borne children on order not to make them slaves. Besides, the resistance took place even before the slaves were transported to the America. Africans tried to escape from the whites on their own territory, committed suicides by jumping from the ships or refusing to eat. There were also tries of insurrections on the ships.

The very first effect of the rebellions and runaways was the mass execution of the black population. The blacks were hanged or killed by the police officers in the North and in the South, where rebellions were mostly oppressed, these conditions turned to greater sufferings and repressions for the enslaved Africans.

Nevertheless, the slave resistance had great political significance (Oakes, 1986, p. 104). The issue of slavery was one of the most crucial during the American Civil War. The resistance of enslaved Africans results in their freedom to vote and other civil liberties, which every man should possess. Showing their disagreement with the system slaves managed to restructure it.

## References

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