

# African american history essay

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



Slavery began in the late 16th century to early 18th century. Africans were brought to American colonies by white masters to come and work on their plantations in the South. They were treated harshly with no payments for all their hard work. In addition, they lived under harsh living conditions, and this led to their resistance against these harsh conditions. The racism towards the African Americans who were slaves was at its extreme as they did not have any rights; no civil nor political rights.

The conditions were worse for the slaves, and they decided to resist in order to free themselves from the slavery institution. African slaves used various strategies of resistance to slavery. According to Hine, Hine, and Harrold (66), “such resistance ranged from shirking assigned work to sabotage, escape and rebellion”. African American slaves had three forms of resistance against slavery which were; escaping, day-to-days acts and rebellion against their masters.

The major form of resistance the slaves used was by escaping. The Underground Railway was their main route for escape in the 1800, s and it helped them escape to the North. They ran away from their masters especially when they were to be punished, or to get relief from a heavy work load. The slaves escaped from their masters, and worked with each other on ways to overthrow slavery by becoming abolitionists. After escaping, they would assemble together, and educate each other on how to stop slavery, and being used by the white masters. Some slaves were able to escape slavery permanently by going to the North where there was no slavery. Another most common form of resistance slaves used was known as day-to-day resistance. This was small acts rebellion whereby they could fail to

report on the farms, and strike (Bauer and Bauer, 400). Other forms of day-to-day resistance were sabotage whereby they break their working tools, set the buildings on fire so as to avoid working on that day, injuring themselves, poisoning their masters' animals, crops, and even the masters themselves. This helped them to meet, and educate themselves on how to be set free from the slavery institution. In addition, the slaves also used ways like being ignorant, malingering, and slow while working so as to free themselves from slavery. In addition, they could also feign sickness so as not to work and gain relief from the harsh working conditions. The slaves could do all these in order to be alienated from their masters, and at least have a rest from the heavy work loads. Some slaves even used extreme forms of day-to day acts like suicide, arson, self mutilation, and even murder of their masters and mistresses. According to Vox, slaves could go to an extent of taking poison, cutting of their fingers, arms, legs, and toes just to avoid working. They poisoned, injured and murdered their masters in desperate hopes of getting freedom from slavery, and the harsh treatments they were receiving. The slaves used rebellions or anti-slavery movements as a form of resistance against slavery. However, the result of slave insurrections was mass executions, and many of them avoided these rebellions for the fear of being executed. The famous insurrections in the American history were the Gabriel Prosser's conspiracy in 1800, Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831, and the Stono Rebellion of 1739. Among these rebellions, only the Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831, and the Stono Rebellion of 1739, was successful. During this insurrection, the slaves killed the whites, seized their arms, and even burned their houses. Additionally, many slave revolts erupted in the 18th century for

example in Grenada, Jamaica, Guadeloupe, Venezuela, Venezuela, and San Domingue (Raboteau 67). Many slaves were able to flee to remote regions, and carry on with guerilla warfare. Major revolts against slavery took place in many cities in Virginia, Louisiana, Barbados, South Carolina, and other cities. According to Hine, Hine, and Harrold (162), many slave owners became anxious of the revolts, and managed to derail them before they took place and arrested, and executed the planners. “ The accused received public trials and the jury convicted 76 of them. Thirty five including Vesey and Gullah Jack were hanged” (Hine, Hine, and Harrold 162).

In addition, slaves used theft as a form of resistance. The slaves stole money, food, livestock, liquor, and even livestock from their masters. They did steal from their masters so as to irritate them, and when confronted, they would slow down on their work, and this was a prefect form of resistance from heavy work loads. Moreover, the slaves refused to do satisfactory work. They never did a good job for their masters as a form of resistance to slavery. They did shoddy work on the plantations, and homes of their masters so as to rebel against slavery. Slaves could use their native languages in dances, and songs to provoke and tease their masters without their knowledge as a form of resistance.

The slaves used covert ways in order to be successful because open revolt, and violent resistance strategies had dire consequences. The covert forms were very successful to them because, they realized that in order to survive and live a trouble-free life, acceptance and cooperation was obligatory. The most effective method of slavery resistance was the day-to-day resistance (Bauer and Bauer, 392). It was more effective because, the slaves were able

to evade doing the days work loads. The small acts resistance helped reinforce the slavery institution as it pushed the boundaries of freedom slowly eroding the institution of slavery. Slaves pushed their masters to relieve them from heavy work loads, and give them some freedom, and when they declined, they punctuated to everyday's forms of resistance which led to running away, and rebellions. The less radical ways like escaping, and day-to-day forms of resistance were the most effective. The overt forms of resistance did not work well for them because if caught by their masters, they had dire consequences. Armed rebellion was used less frequent than concealed forms of resistance. Rebellion forms of resistance were discovered in advance even before they are carried out, and this did form of resistance was less effective. Marronage was used but this strategy angered the slave masters, and those found were brutally beaten and murdered and this hurt them instead of helping them.

Ones geographical location influenced the type of resistance they used against slavery. The slaves who were familiar with the geographical terrain of North America found it very easy to escape to the North without any difficulties. The slaves in Border States had an advantage because they were able to escape easily to the North and even to Canada.

In essence, African Americans worked as slaves for white masters for many years. They became increasingly dissatisfied with slavery, and they decided to resist against this institution. Africans strived to overcome the slavery institution, and they were able to do it. They used the three forms of resistance against slavery which were; escaping, day-to-days acts and

rebellion against their masters. The most effective form of resistance was day-to-day resistance and this relived them from their work loads.

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