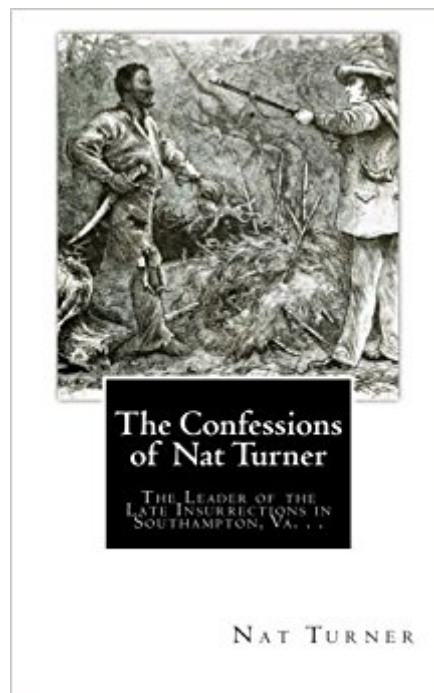


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The Confessions Of Nat Turner: The Leader Of The Late Insurrections In Southampton, Va. . .



Synopsis

The late insurrection in Southampton has greatly excited the public mind, and led to a thousand idle, exaggerated and mischievous reports. It is the first instance in our history of an open rebellion of the slaves, and attended with such atrocious circumstances of cruelty and destruction, as could not fail to leave a deep impression, not only upon the minds of the community where this fearful tragedy was wrought, but throughout every portion of our country, in which this population is to be found. Public curiosity has been on the stretch to understand the origin and progress of this dreadful conspiracy, and the motives which influences its diabolical actors. The insurgent slaves had all been destroyed, or apprehended, tried and executed, (with the exception of the leader,) without revealing anything at all satisfactory, as to the motives which governed them, or the means by which they expected to accomplish their object. Everything connected with this sad affair was wrapt in mystery, until Nat Turner, the leader of this ferocious band, whose name has resounded throughout our widely extended empire, was captured. This "great Bandit" was taken by a single individual, in a cave near the residence of his late owner, on Sunday, the thirtieth of October, without attempting to make the slightest resistance, and on the following day safely lodged in the jail of the County. His captor was Benjamin Phipps, armed with a shot gun well charged. Nat's only weapon was a small light sword which he immediately surrendered, and begged that his life might be spared. Since his confinement, by permission of the Jailor, I have had ready access to him, and finding that he was willing to make a full and free confession of the origin, progress and consummation of the insurrectory movements of the slaves of which he was the contriver and head; I determined for the gratification of public curiosity to commit his statements to writing, and publish them, with little or no variation, from his own words. That this is a faithful record of his confessions, the annexed certificate of the County Court of Southampton, will attest. They certainly bear one stamp of truth and sincerity. He makes no attempt (as all the other insurgents who were examined did,) to exculpate himself, but frankly acknowledges his full participation in all the guilt of the transaction. He was not only the contriver of the conspiracy, but gave the first blow towards its execution. It will thus appear, that whilst every thing upon the surface of society wore a calm and peaceful aspect; whilst not one note of preparation was heard to warn the devoted inhabitants of woe and death, a gloomy fanatic was revolving in the recesses of his own dark, bewildered, and overwrought mind, schemes of indiscriminate massacre to the whites. Schemes too fearfully executed as far as his fiendish band proceeded in their desolating march. No cry for mercy penetrated their flinty bosoms. No acts of remembered kindness made the least impression upon these remorseless murderers. Men, women and children, from hoary age to helpless infancy were involved in the same cruel fate. Never did a

band of savages do their work of death more unsparingly. Apprehension for their own personal safety seems to have been the only principle of restraint in the whole course of their bloody proceedings. And it is not the least remarkable feature in this horrid transaction, that a band actuated by such hellish purposes, should have resisted so feebly, when met by the whites in arms. Desperation alone, one would think, might have led to greater efforts. More than twenty of them attacked Dr. Blunt's house on Tuesday morning, a little before day-break, defended by two men and three boys. They fled precipitately at the first fire; and their future plans of mischief, were entirely disconcerted and broken up. Escaping thence, each individual sought his own safety either in concealment, or by returning home, with the hope...

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Customer Reviews

Nat Turner (1800 - 1831) was an enslaved African American who led a rebellion of slaves and free blacks in Southampton County, Virginia on August 21, 1831. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is the text of the original pamphlet published by lawyer Thomas Gray in 1831, and not the 1967 William Styron novel of the same title. Five stars because it's an important historical document. Note that there are two Kindle versions. One has a plain cover (ASIN B004TQZIM6) and the one I have has an image of a ship on the cover (ASIN B01M5ISROO). The latter version has some interesting images tacked on at the end, which were not part of Gray's original pamphlet. Gray published the pamphlet to give the curious residents of Virginia some insight regarding the slave rebellion. Some

historians have questioned accuracy of Gray's account, although Gray claims that he wrote exactly what Turner confessed. Gray does put his spin on it, and it's confusing when, near the end, without warning, the first-person voice of Turner suddenly switches to Gray's first-person commentary about Turner's actions.*** SPOILER ALERT ***I was expecting Nat Turner to explain that mistreatment by slave owners led to the rebellion. Instead, he states that his actions were inspired by spiritual visions he had. This may be true, if Thomas Gray did not omit any parts of the confession. One could also view this as propaganda if Gray removed any comments Turner may have made about experiences with cruel masters, and/or the injustice of slavery leading to the rebellion. Perhaps it was more palatable to the frightened white populace to believe the "insanity defense" -- that strange visions made Turner lead a murderous rampage. If Gray had suggested, via Turner's alleged confession, that slaves were reacting to maltreatment, he may have been vilified for this. Gray had to show appropriate horror at the murder of numerous whites, including women and children, with many slaughtered while asleep. It was horrible, and I imagine Turner and some slaves viewed this as a war tactic ("collateral damage"), as they were on their way to attack the town of Jerusalem. We may never know the truth about the Turner's intentions in leading the revolt, but it is a documented fact that the roving bands of slaves killed at least 55 white folks, and roughly 200 slaves were killed in the suppression of the rebellion.

I believe this is a good book it is direct. If I read it correctly, there was not a trial, the transcripts of the court proceedings would have been nice to add with his confession.

Great read and true. unfortunately not many folks even know what a hero Turner really was, sacrificed himself to take a stand against inhumane treatment of slaves

This is the confession of Nat Turner given to a Mr. Grey, a local lawyer, while Turner awaited trial. It is the primary source on the actions of Turner in his rebellion. Though much discussed the Turner rebellion has little real documentation beyond this confession, court documents and news accounts at the time. A careful reading of the confession reveals an individual of doubtful sanity. It is interesting how seceding generations have reimagined Turner to fit different political agendas over the years since his death.

What a tragedy it is that people like Nat Turner who were so brilliant and could have done so much for the world were not allowed to rise to their potential. The brutality of these acts is shocking, but

even more horrifying was further reading I did about the response of the white people afterwards. The actions of Nat Turner's followers pales in comparison to the revenge of the white community on their slaves.

It is interesting to see the difference in how people perceive warfare waged in righteous indignation at the hands of a black man, but justify the crusades as well as other examples of socioeconomic domination and treachery. - Jonathan L. Berkley

The book was great. It really draws you into it emotionally & mentally. And I enjoyed how Nat Turner saw through the shenanigans of the white manipulation through religion to control the slaves even more.

Good read

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