

10-1-2004

North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts

Norman M. Shapiro

Follow this and additional works at: <https://louis.uah.edu/huntsville-historical-review>



Part of the [History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Shapiro, Norman M. (2004) "North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts," *Huntsville Historical Review*. Vol. 30: No. 1, Article 4.

Available at: <https://louis.uah.edu/huntsville-historical-review/vol30/iss1/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by LOUIS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Huntsville Historical Review by an authorized editor of LOUIS.

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts

North Alabama's Response To the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts

NORMAN M. SHAPIRO

Slavery was introduced in the Western Hemisphere with the establishment of the European colonies in the 1500s and into the region which is now Alabama in the early 1700s when it was part of France's Louisiana Colony. And with the institution of slavery, the fear of slave uprisings was implicit whenever relatively large numbers of slaves were present. When the Mississippi Territory, which comprised "Alabama," was established by the U.S. Congress in 1798, Governor David Holmes wrote to General James Wilkinson who was the senior officer in the Army, "... of the slaves who compose so large a portion of our population, I entertain much stronger apprehensions. Scarcely a day passes without my receiving some information relative to the designs of those people to insurrect. It is true that no clear or positive evidence of their intentions has been communicated; but certain facts, and expressions of their views have justly excited considerable alarm among the citizens."¹

The most terrifying consequences of slavery, however, were the outright slave rebellions which were often bloody and uncontrolled. But because American plantations were far smaller than those in other parts of the Western Hemisphere and because in the United States, unlike other areas, whites outnumbered slaves, slave rebellions were smaller and less frequent than in the West Indies and South America. The most massive rebellion outside the United States was the slave insurrection of the 1790s that overthrew slavery and French rule in Saint Domingue and established the nation of Haiti. Although no insurrection of that magnitude occurred in the United States, there still were a significant number and some elicited great apprehension and responses in slave-holding areas, including north Alabama, which it is our purpose to examine.

Herbert Aptheker, who provided the most extensive analysis of slave revolts in the United States, proposed and utilized as a definition for a slave revolt that it (1) involve a minimum of ten slaves and (2) that contemporary references label the event as an uprising, plot or insurrection, or the equivalent of these terms. On this basis he writes that he found records of approximately two hundred and fifty revolts and conspiracies in the history of American Negro slavery.² He also describes many more slave disorder incidents, including a few in Alabama, but doesn't always distinguish the ones counted among the 250. Leah Rawls Atkins, however, writes

in her section of the most recent comprehensive, history of Alabama, “Although no slave insurrections occurred in Alabama, there were numerous rumors of slave unrest, and the white population lived in fear of a slave uprising.”³ There were incidents in Montgomery County, Talladega and other areas in Alabama, nevertheless, noted by Apthecker and at least four other sources that might well “qualify” as insurrections.^{4,5,6,7} And, in addition, there was an astonishing, but little-known, event in Madison and Limestone counties in May, 1861, that also indicates that Alabama was not immune to slave insurrections.

The event is recorded in an unpublished diary, *Daily Journal of Colonel D. R. Hundley for 1861*. Daniel Hundley was a distinguished citizen of North Alabama and his entry for January 1, 1861, states, “This is the beginning of a new year. I pray God its ending may not be as gloomy as its beginning. Politically the heavens are dark and portentous (sic), and war, famine, and pestilence may all be looked for during the next twelve months. So far as my private affairs are concerned they are in a deplorable state. I do not love to think of them. I can only put my trust in God and be prepared in my own mind to meet the worse.” But in spite of the gathering storm of war and his unhappy state of mind, he resumed the life of a Southern Gentleman who was characterized typically as, “a hunter, a fisherman, and a fine rider, and his love of the outdoors contributed to his physical perfection.”⁸ The Madison-Limestone Insurrection extended over the last two weeks in May, 1861, about one month after the fall of Fort Sumter. It is best recounted in Daniel Hundley’s own words:

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 1861: Startling news! I have just learned that a Vigilance Committee in Triana has just ferreted out a most hellish insurrectionary plot among the slaves, and in consequence I expect to go out patrolling tonight, a thing I never did before. I have already rode about thirty miles today, but I do not expect to close my eyes tonight.

SUNDAY, MAY 19, 1861: Returned home just after daylight. Was going nearly all night, but owing to a change in plans only succeeded in arresting one negro. We arrested him about half past two o’clock.

MONDAY, MAY 20, 1861: Today I became a member of a Committee of Public Safety, to investigate into the insurrectionary movements of the slaves in the neighborhood of my father’s residence. We have punished several, and the testimony elicited is very startling. The whole servile population appears to be disaffected, and the most egregious falsehoods everywhere pass current among them.



Daniel R. Hundley

TUESDAY, MAY 21, 1861: Our Committee continued its labors today, and the developments are utterly confounding. It seems that the negroes have concluded that Lincoln is soon going to free them all, and they are everywhere making preparations to aid him when he makes his appearance.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 1861: Engaged all day in the labor of the Vigilance Committee. Similar committees are being organized in every neighborhood.

THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1861: So far as our investigations have now extended, we are led to believe that Peter Mud, Andrew Green, and Nicholas Moore, slaves, and one or two free negroes, aided by base white men, are the leaders in the proposed servile insurrection.

FRIDAY, MAY 24, 1861: Our Committee still continues their labors. Our task today was to examine the slaves of Mrs. Rice, many of whom had to be severely whipped, and some will be hung.

SATURDAY, MAY 25, 1861: By invitation, members of several committees today met with the Triana Committee. This Committee has already hung one free negro, named Jacobs, and today had up an old English abolitionist, who, for lack of proper evidence, was sent to Huntsville jail to await the future action of the Committee.

The war news is not very exciting this week.

SUNDAY, MAY 26, 1861: They hung one negro of Mrs. Rice's in Mooresville yesterday. A jury of twelve men selected by his overseer, were allowed to hear the evidence against him, and afterwards bring in their verdict – it being the desire of the citizens to preserve the spirit at all events, although it may be necessary in these exciting and dangerous times to override the letter thereof.

MONDAY, 27 MAY, 1861: Our Committee renewed its labors again today, and we had a very exciting session, owing to the fact that Dr. John Pickett had run off Peter Mud, one of the ringleaders in the conspiracy, and were informed by telegraph that the police had secured him in Memphis.

TUESDAY, MAY 28, 1861: Our Committee today visited the plantation of Mr. Sam Moore. On yesterday, Andrew Green, one of the instigators and leaders of the conspiracy, was hung in Triana. He made a partial confession.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 1861: Being at leisure, I went fishing today, in both forenoon and afternoon. The war news is exciting. Lincoln's men have taken possession of Alexandria, and thus the

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts
“sacred soil of Virginia” has been invaded. They lost one of their best officers, Col. Ellsworth, but otherwise there was little damage done on either side. (Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth commanded the First Zouave Regt., N.Y. Militia. He was assassinated at the Marshall House after the Union troops had taken possession of the city of Alexandria, Virginia, May 24, 1861.

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 1861: We had an exciting time in the Committee today. First we tried a free negro, who was sentenced to the penitentiary for life. We then tried parson Peter Mud. Peter was proven to be one of the principal conspirators, but the influence of his master’s family in his behalf was great – however, he was found guilty by the jury, and was hung about half an hour after sundown.

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 1861: We met the Triana Committee again today. Two negroes were tried, but the final decision in their cases was postponed for one month – in the meantime the negroes to remain in Huntsville jail. We also tried the case of Bob Williams, white man. He was given until Christmas to settle up his affairs and leave the country.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 1861: Being at leisure once more, I went fishing in the forenoon. We have had many rumors of battles this week but nothing serious has occurred so far that I know of. The rumors have all proven to be false, and what our President is doing I am at a loss to conjecture. I should be glad to hear that he has driven old Abe’s blackguards out of Virginia.

Hundley doesn’t mention insurrection again until June 9 when he writes, “The committee seems to be satisfied with their labors thus far and by apparent general consent are doing nothing more about the rumored insurrection.” (a strange choice of words considering that Hundley indicates that they had hung at least four negroes). No report of the events recorded by Hundley were found in either of the two Huntsville newspapers, *The Southern Advocate* or *The Huntsville Democrat*, which were still in publication at the time, and the Limestone County newspapers of that period have not survived. Hundley’s account is mentioned, however, in two recent local histories^{9,10} and his entry for May 25, 1861, is probably confirmed by the following notation in the Madison County Commissioner Court Minutes for the May term, 1861:¹¹

“Ordered that the County Treasurer pay to James H. Weaver Ten Dollars for Keeping County Prisoners in Jail to wit Jacobs and McVey.”¹²

The fact that this insurrection may have been unreported was not unusual according to Aptheker who notes that, “In any number of cases one finds admissions from Southern newspapers that their coverage of this feature of current events was something other than complete, even if the matters were not of local origin.” He then continues, “Thus, one must depend frequently upon government archives, personal letters (sometimes published in distant newspapers), journals, **diaries**, and court records in an attempt to piece together the story.”¹³

Copies of the handwritten diary are available in the Heritage Room of the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, the Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and in Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University. Hundley left other diaries: A *Daily Journal for 1859* which is at the Clements Library of the University of Michigan and the *Daily Journal of Colonel D. R. Hundley for 1864* which he later expanded and published under the title, *Prison Echoes of the Great Rebellion*.¹⁴ He also wrote and had published an influential treatise, *Social Relations in our Southern States*.¹⁵ Hundley’s activities with regard to the above “insurrection” are mentioned in two review articles^{16,17} of the latter publication but it will be seen in Appendix I. that his contributions to the history of this period go far beyond this incident.

The Major Slave Revolts

Although slave revolts within the present borders of the United States were noted as early as 1526,¹⁸ it is the notorious revolts of the nineteenth century that have drawn the most attention and/or impacted North Alabama. These are usually associated with the name of the revolt leader and are noted here with brief descriptions below from various sources: Gabriel Prosser in Henrico County, Virginia, 1800; Charles Deslondes in St. Charles and St. John the Baptist parishes, Louisiana, 1811; Denmark Vesey in Charleston, South Carolina, 1822; Nat Turner in Southampton County, Virginia, 1831; John Murrell in Madison County, Mississippi, 1835; and John Brown’s Raid in Harper’s Ferry, West Virginia, 1859.

Gabriel Prosser, son of an African-born mother, grew up as the slave of Thomas H. Prosser. Gabriel became a deeply religious man, strongly influenced by Biblical example. In the spring and summer of 1800, he laid plans for a slave insurrection aimed at creating an independent black state in Virginia with himself as king. He planned a three-pronged attack on Richmond that would seize the arsenal, take the powder house, and kill all whites *except Frenchmen, Methodists, and Quakers*. Some historians believe that

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts

Gabriel's large army of slaves, assembled 6 miles outside the city on the appointed night, might have succeeded had it not been for a violent rain-storm that washed out bridges and inundated roads. Before the rebel forces could be reassembled, Governor James Monroe was informed of the plot and ordered out the state militia. Gabriel and about 34 of his companions were subsequently arrested, tried, and hanged.

Charles Deslondes, a free mulatto from Saint-Domingue, led a group of about 400 slaves in a large revolt in Louisiana in 1811. The insurgents launched an attack from a plantation upriver from New Orleans and marched down River Road toward that city, killing two whites, burning plantations and crops, and capturing weapons and ammunition. Planters organized militiamen and vigilantes, and were reinforced with United States Army troops from Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The free black militia offered its services to the authorities, and one company was accepted. The two sides met outside of New Orleans, and sixty-six slaves were killed in the battle, with others missing or captured and held for trial. Two whites were killed. Of the slaves who were tried, twenty-one were sentenced to death, shot, and decapitated, and their heads were placed on poles along the River Road as a warning to other potential rebel slaves.

Denmark Vesey was a boy in 1781 when he was sold to a Bermuda slaver captain named Joseph Vesey, and accompanied him on numerous voyages until 1783 when he settled with his owner in Charleston. In 1800, Denmark was allowed to purchase his freedom with \$600 he had won in a street lottery. He was already familiar with the great Haitian slave revolt of the 1790s, and while working as a carpenter he read anti-slavery literature. Dissatisfied with his second-class status as a freedman and determined to help relieve the far more oppressive conditions of bondsmen he knew, Vesey planned and organized an uprising of city and plantation blacks. The plan reportedly called for the rebels to attack guardhouses and arsenals, seize the arms, kill all whites, burn and destroy the city, and free the slaves. As many as 9,000 blacks may have been involved, though some scholars dispute this figure. Warned by a house servant during the last week of May, 1822, white authorities on the eve of the scheduled outbreak made massive military preparations, which forestalled the insurrection. During the ensuing two months, some 130 blacks were arrested. In the trials that followed, 67 were convicted of trying to raise an insurrection; of these, 35, including Vesey, were hanged, and 32 were condemned to exile. In addition, four white men were fined and imprisoned for encouraging the plot.

Nat Turner was born in Southampton, Virginia on October 2, 1800. Nat, the son of slaves, was the property of Benjamin Turner, a prosperous plantation owner. He was taught to read by Benjamin's oldest son, Samuel,



The Capture of Nat Turner

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts

who became his master after Benjamin's death about 1810. Nat apparently developed deep religious beliefs and, encouraged by his parents, gradually began to believe that God had chosen him to lead his people out of slavery. Turner was sold to Joseph Travis in 1831 and in February of that year, he took an eclipse of the sun as a supernatural sign from God to start an insurrection. It wasn't until August 21, 1831, however, that Turner and about seven other slaves killed Travis and his family to launch his rebellion. In all, about 50 whites were killed including Elizabeth, the widow of his former master, Samuel Turner. Nat had hoped that his action would cause a massive slave uprising, but only 75 joined his rebellion. Over 3,000 members of the state militia were sent to deal with Turner's rebellion which was put down in a few days. In retaliation, perhaps more than a hundred innocent slaves were killed. Turner went into hiding but was captured six weeks later. His subsequent trial featured his now well-known, confession and he was executed on November 11, 1831.

One piece of, perhaps, significant information that has apparently been overlooked by historians is that Benjamin Turner, who died in 1810, bequeathed to his son, Samuel, seven of his thirty slaves: Sam, Natt, Lydia, Nancy, Drew, Chary, Miver and Elick. (Southampton Wills and Administration, Book VII, p.109. Obtained from Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.) Nancy was Natt or Nat's mother. Accordingly, the famous slave may not have been named Nat or Nathaniel as he is sometimes called.

John A. Murrell or Murel was a minor criminal in western Tennessee whose several convictions included a ten-year term for slave-stealing commencing August 17, 1834, and who died of tuberculosis six months after his release in April, 1844. Virgil A. Stewart, who may have been an accomplice of Murrell, bears main responsibility for inciting this event. Shortly after Murrell's incarceration, Stewart arranged for the publication of a pamphlet, issued under the name of one Augustus Q. Walton, entitled *A History of the Detection, Conviction, Life and Designs of John A. Murel, the Great Western Land Pirate* (Athens, Tenn., 1835). According to this work, Murrell had been the demonic, homicidal head of a huge band of outlaws—the Mystic Clan -whose foul intent was to stir up slave revolts throughout the South and steal everything they could get their hands on during the confusion. Stewart was depicted as a hero who at great personal risk had saved the South by exposing Murrell before his conspiracy was fully hatched. The story had few believers in Tennessee, where folks knew about Murrell, but there were tremendous repercussions throughout much of the South (and North Alabama) when Stewart started peddling the pamphlet in Mississippi. Already fearful of slave uprisings on remote farms and plantations, the whites of the area began inquisitions of slaves suspected of rebellious

leanings; and under torture some of these falsely implicated other potential troublemakers, both black and white. Dozens of blacks and perhaps fifteen whites were hanged or murdered, and many more were whipped and banished—as were all known gamblers along the lower Mississippi River.

John Brown, on October 16, 1859, led eighteen men, thirteen whites and five blacks, into Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Three other members of his force formed a rearguard at a nearby Maryland farm. A veteran of the violent struggles between pro- and anti-slavery forces in Kansas, Brown intended to provoke a general uprising of blacks that would lead to a war against slavery. The raiders seized the federal buildings and cut the telegraph wires. Expecting local slaves to join them, Brown and his men waited in the armory while the townspeople surrounded the building. The raiders and the civilians exchanged gunfire, and eight of Brown's men were killed or captured. By daybreak on October 18, U.S. Marines under the command of Brevet Colonel Robert E. Lee stormed Brown's position in the arsenal's engine house and captured or killed most of his force. Five of the conspirators, including Brown's son Owen, escaped to safety in Canada and the North. Severely wounded and taken to the jail in Charles Town, Virginia, John Brown stood trial for treason against the commonwealth of Virginia, for murder, and for conspiring with slaves to rebel. On November 2, 1859, a jury convicted him and sentenced him to death. Brown readily accepted the sentence and declared that he had acted in accordance with God's commandments. Responding to persistent rumors and written threats, Henry A. Wise, governor of Virginia, called out state militia companies to guard against a possible rescue of Brown and his followers. John Brown was hanged in Charles Town on December 2, 1859.

The Response to Slave Revolts

Herbert Aptheker makes an interesting observation in his opening chapter on nineteenth century slave revolts: "Probably the most fateful year in the history of American Negro slave revolts is that of 1800, for it was then that Nat Turner and John Brown were born, that Denmark Vesey bought his freedom, and it was then that the great conspiracy named after Gabriel, slave of Thomas H. Prosser of Henrico County, Virginia, occurred."¹⁹ This "fateful year" was about four years before Isaac and Joseph Criner settled near New Market becoming the first of a long procession of known immigrants to what would become Madison County, Alabama. John Hunt settled in 1805 and by 1809, the first census of the area, taken in January, 1809, listed 353 heads of families, of whom 82, or 23 per cent, were slave holders.

Denmark Vesey: The first local newspaper, *The Madison Gazette*, wasn't

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts published until June, 1812, and no copies have survived.²⁰ Accordingly, the first of the revolts to be noted in North Alabama was the Denmark Vesev revolt in the Summer of 1822.

The Alabama Republican, which became the successor to *The Madison Gazette* in August 1816, published on July 26, 1822, an undated item from *The New York Spectator*:

“An insurrection of the negroes at Charleston, South Carolina, is stated to have been recently organized. Among other things, these sable heroes were to have murdered Governor Bennet, and one of the leaders was to receive in marriage, as a reward for destroying his master, the fair daughter of the Governor, a young lady about 16 years of age. We are assured that the plot was detected three days before the period fixed for its accomplishment, and the ring-leaders committed for trial. No notice of the affair is taken in the Charleston papers; but private letters received in town yesterday, say that it was intentionally kept secret.”

The Republican then printed on August 23, 1822, a dispatch from Charleston, dated July 27, which included the following: “Yesterday, about 8 o’clock, 22 culprits expiated, on the gallows, the crime of which they had been convicted – an attempt to raise an insurrection, not only in the city, but in various parts of the State of S. Carolina.” There was no further news of the event in the newspaper until September 20, 1822, however, no copies of the *Republican* are available between August 30 and September 20, 1822. On that date, the *Republican* published a copy of a lengthy letter from Governor Thomas Bennet of South Carolina, dated August 10, 1822 from Charleston, which summarized the whole affair and the investigation which ended on August 8, 1822, a period of about ten weeks. There was no mention of any local response in the available newspapers. It will be noted that articles appeared in the Huntsville newspaper about a month, more or less, after their occurrence which was typical of newspapers before the telegraph became available for the transmission of news around 1846. Obviously, this could have an effect on the local response and in this case, the happening was essentially over before the first news of the event reached North Alabama.

Unlike the earlier events, the Nat Turner revolt of 1831 provoked considerable response in Huntsville. A story in *The Democrat*, entitled,

“Insurrection in Virginia” on September 8, 1831 used a somewhat larger typeface to accentuate the story:

“Our last Virginia papers bring us the disagreeable tidings that an insurrection of the Negroes has lately taken place in Southhampton. Between 25 and 30 families have been murdered. The negroes are said to be runaways from the Dismal Swamp; but this we presume is incorrect. The number of insurgents is estimated at 4 or 500. Inevitable destruction is their certain doom. The following, from the *Petersburg Intelligencer* contains most of the facts.”

The article from the *Petersburg Intelligencer* was dated August 26, 1831, and began,

“A great excitement has prevailed in this town for some days past, in consequence of the receipt of information on Monday night last that an insurrection had broken out among the negroes in Southhampton.” The article continued with essentially the same preliminary information as the leads.”

Two days later the *Southern Advocate*, under the same headline, noted, “The eastern mail of Tuesday night brought us accounts of a most heartrending and deplorable calamity which has befallen our fellow citizens of Southhampton County, Virginia.” This article continued with an even more lurid description of the same preliminary information and also proposed an initial prescription for a response:

“From the contemplation of this scene of ruffian violence and ruthless destruction, would it not be well to look to ourselves? Are we entirely exempted from all danger of a like visitation – and ought we not to take some precautions to guard against its possible occurrence? We know that this is a delicate subject and requires delicate dealing, but it ought to be looked boldly in the face. The first step towards safety is to disarm every negro whether bond or free in the community, and to keep them disarmed. This step we consider indispensably necessary. Another precautionary measure is rigidly to enforce the laws in relation to their own time, by slaves. By this proceeding the safety of the community will be rendered more certain, whilst a public nuisance will be removed – as it is known to be a nuisance of an almost insupportable character. The number of free negroes and slaves who hire their own time and

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts (who are for the most part a thievish, idle and worthless class of society) is at once a source of danger to the whites and, and of corruption to the slaves. We throw out the hints for the consideration of the corporate authorities, believing that the time has arrived for energetic measures to be pursued.”

This pattern continued for several weeks with both newspapers printing stories from Virginia and other Southern newspapers in addition to local items. The *Huntsville Democrat* of October 13, for example, printed a dispatch from the September 19 *Richmond Compiler* which provided a detailed description of Nat Turner and announced that the Virginia governor had offered a reward for his capture. It also reported on the court proceedings of the trial of some of Turner's band wherein 21 slaves were condemned, nine recommended for reprieve and 12 executed. Turner was still at large and hiding when *The Huntsville Democrat* of October 20 printed one of the many false reports of his capture. He was finally captured on October 30, brought to trial on November 5 and executed on November 11, 1831.

Additional recommendations for response appeared in the newspapers throughout the period: The October 15 *Southern Advocate* printed an editorial on the inadequacy of the state's patrol laws and suggested that the legislature invest the Judge of the County Court and the Commissioner of Roads and Revenues with the power to levy a special tax in addition to the ordinary county levy which would permit the establishment of effective patrol detachments. In the same issue, the *Advocate* published a local ordinance which created a night watch and patrol of two persons, prescribed their duties and established penalties for violations. The complete ordinance appears in Appendix II.

During the week before the meeting of the Alabama Legislature on November 21, 1831, both papers pleaded for action on the “problem” of free negroes. This subject was addressed in the *Southern Advocate's* first news of the Turner insurrection on September 10 and was considered, throughout the South, to be one of the main instigators of insurrection. The *Huntsville Democrat*, in an editorial on November 17 entitled “Free Negroes and Mulattoes,” declared:

“It has been a matter of astonishment to us, with what careless indifference our Legislature have, heretofore, looked upon the degraded, wretched and mischievous population, placed at the head of this article. They occupy a kind of middle existence between the freeman and the slave, but under circumstances that forbid a close

association with either, - nature herself has erected an eternal barrier to their intercourse with the white man, and policy dictates the danger of their communication with slaves. – A numerous population in a situation like this, is dangerous to the morals, peace and tranquility of the community.”

The editorial went on to suggest that the Legislature consider making an appropriation for taking them to Liberia as the Colonization Society had done all that they could do.²¹ The *Southern Advocate* on November 19 was a little more solicitous in writing that “some measures should be adopted to prevent an increase of this species of our population, by forbidding the migration of free people of color to this State, and by prohibiting the further emancipation of slaves, unless with the condition of removal beyond its limits.” The *Advocate* also reiterated its earlier plea for adoption of a most rigid code of patrol regulations.

The *Huntsville Democrat* of October 6, 1831, printed a significant item about the recent discovery of “incendiary documents” in the South. These publications were associated with the abolitionist movement which became very important in the three decades leading to the Civil War. The undated story from the *Tarborough Free Press* of North Carolina appears below.

“The excitement produced a few months since, in the Southern country, by the discovery of several copies of the notorious ‘Walker Pamphlet,’ is doubtless still fresh in the recollection of most of our readers.²² Notwithstanding the pointed rebukes which the publishers of that inflammatory production received from many of the well disposed and reflecting part of our northern brethren, it appears that some misguided and deluded lunatics are still bent on exciting our colored population to scenes at which the heart sickens on the bare recital, and which instead of improving their moral or physical condition, cannot fail to overwhelm the actors in ruin, and curtail the privileges of all the others. Let them view the first fruits of their diabolical projects in the Southampton massacre, and pause – an awful retribution awaits them.”

A letter from a gentleman in Washington City, dated the 20th ult. to the Postmaster at this place says:

“An incendiary paper, *The Liberator*, is circulated openly among the free blacks of this city: and if you will search, it is very prob-

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts able you will find it among the slaves of your country.²³ It is published in Boston or Philadelphia by a white man, with the avowed purpose of inciting rebellion in the South; and I am informed, is to be carried through your county by secret agents, who are to come amongst you under the pretext of pedling(sic), &c. Keep a sharp look out for these villains, and if you catch them, by all that is sacred you ought to barbecue them. Diffuse this information amongst whom it may concern.

What a fine subject such a fellow would be for Capt. Slick's company to operate upon! If he should be caught in North Alabama, we shall pledge him our word that he will receive *unceremoniously*, one hundred lashes; a neat coat of tar and feathers, and he will be glad to get off at that. – Eds.Dem.”

The name, Captain Slick, applied to the vigilante-type justice that prevailed in most communities during the time of the Mississippi Territory.

Another view of these precarious times is afforded by Betty Fladeland's biography of James G . Birney who was a prominent (see Endnotes) resident of Huntsville from 1818 to 1833.²⁴ Fladeland writes, “Events in the summer of 1831 strengthened Birney's inclination to move from the slave states.” She then continues:

“On the night of August 21 Nat Turner, a slave preacher at Southampton, Virginia, led a group of fellow slaves in an uprising which resulted in the massacre of fifty-five white people. There was no evidence of a widespread or organized conspiracy, but the uprising aroused fears that such might be the case, and it resulted in a tightening of restraints on both the free colored persons and on slaves and in renewed feeling on the part of many that the blacks, especially those who were free, should be removed from the country as far as possible.”

It was not so much fear of a slave uprising as it was the reaction of the whites that Birney watched with dismay. In Huntsville, the papers were full of reports and articles on the insurrection. People talked of little else. A night watch and patrol system was set up, with a ten o'clock curfew for Negroes which was to be strictly enforced. Warnings were issued against any “incendiary” publications, and there were threats of tar and feathers for peddlers who might circulate them. William Lloyd Garrison's *Libera-*

tor, which had been established that year, was especially criticized as a paper designed to incite rebellion.

Birney, along with others, took the opportunity of reintroducing the law of 1827 against importation of slaves which had been repealed in 1829. It passed in January, 1832, but with several amendments. The new bill prohibited the teaching of any colored person, free or slave, to read or write; forbade free negroes from associating with slaves without the consent of their masters; limited to five the number of male slaves who could assemble at any one place off the plantation where they worked; and provided the death penalty for anyone circulating seditious or incendiary literature.²⁵

News reports of the Southampton insurrection excited the whole country, the magnitude of the response varying by region. In the North, it energized the abolitionists; the Southern States revised and strengthened their slave laws, as noted above. Reports and rumors of similar outbreaks were prevalent throughout the South and especially in Virginia and the Carolinas. North Alabama's particular reaction to the Nat Turner insurrection may have been influenced by the fact that many of the resident families were ultimately native to Southside, Virginia. Brothers Simon, Sugars, and Thomas Turner and their cousin John Turner, who were early settlers and plantation owners in Madison County, were second cousins of Nat Turner's first master Benjamin Turner, and there were other Turner cousins in Madison, Limestone, Morgan and Lawrence County.

Signaling the apparent end of the matter, the *Huntsville Democrat* on December 15 printed the following story entitled, "The Last of Nat" from the *Norfolk Herald*. But the effects persisted until and after emancipation and, as we will see later, intellectually to the present day.

"Nat Turner – This wretched culprit expiated his crimes (crimes at the bare mention of which the blood runs cold) on Friday last. He betrayed no emotion but appeared to be reckless of the awful fate that awaited him, and even hurried the executioner in the performance of his duty! Precisely at 12 o'clock he was launched into eternity. – There were but few people to see him hanged. . . . A gentleman of Jerusalem has taken down his confession, which he intends to publish with an accurate likeness of the brigand, taken by Mr. John Crawley, portrait painter of this town, to be lithographed by Endicott & Swett, of Baltimore."

John Murrell: News of the John Murrell affair reached North Alabama on July 21, 1835 when the *Huntsville Advocate* reprinted a report <https://louis.uah.edu/huntsville-historical-review/vol30/iss1/4> 16

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts from the Clinton (Hinds County, Mississippi) *Gazette* of July 11 that described the episode. Hinds and Madison County, Mississippi, were the sites where the supposed insurrection was uncovered. A committee of investigation was promptly formed in Madison County and apprehended two white men, Cotton and Saunders, both of them steam doctors and occasional preachers by profession.²⁶ Before they were hanged in Livingston, Mississippi on July 4, Cotton confessed and furnished detailed plans and a list of the prominent conspirators. A dispatch from the *Natchez Courier and Journal* printed in the *Huntsville Advocate* on July 28 indicated that “gamblers, itinerant preachers, steam doctors and clock peddlers were generally considered the guilty leaders.” Daniel S. Dupre in his political, economic and social history of Madison County’s formative years, *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*, also describes the event and the Madison County response in some detail from the newspaper accounts that continued for most of the year.²⁷ Herbert Aptheker examines the reaction of the whole South in his chapter, 1835 – 1839.²⁸

Coming only four years after the Nat Turner insurrection, it is not surprising that the Murrell affair provoked such an extreme reaction. The *Southern Advocate* published chapters of Stewart’s book on Murrell in August and throughout much of the Fall and the *Huntsville Democrat* also published portions of the book. The fact of white involvement confirmed the view throughout the South that abolitionists were eminently responsible for such uprisings and when the Anti-Slavery Society began flooding the South with anti-slavery tracts in the Summer of 1835, this action contributed to the hysteria. Dupre writes, “The response to the insurrection (in Mississippi) was swift and brutal. As was often the case, vigilante justice borrowed the dispassionate trappings of law to lend an air of legitimacy to the proceedings.”²⁹ A similar response was noted in most of these cases, e.g., *Daily Journal of Colonel D. R. Hundley for 1861*.

On August 25, 1835, the *Southern Advocate* reported that a public meeting was held at the Madison County Courthouse on August 19 where Thomas Bibb (Alabama’s second governor, 1820-1821) was called to the chair and appointed a committee of twenty “whose duty it shall be to determine upon such measures as are deemed necessary and expedient, in all cases connected with the subject of Abolition, and other matters, which have recently so much disturbed and agitated the public mind - - -.” The twenty men appointed, Dupre noted, were all civic leaders and slave holders and “the composition reflected the desire of Madison County’s citizens to face the crisis as a unified and harmonious community.”³⁰ The committee’s deliberations were announced at a public meeting on August 29 and in the *Southern Advocate* on September 1. The report began with an introductory editorial that expressed the importance of the meeting and its subject:

“THE MEETING—the proceedings of which are given was decidedly the largest and most respectable ever held in this town, on any occasion, whatever. The Preamble and Resolutions are temperate and firm, and such as befit the occasion. The feelings of indignation which pervade this community, are not, and indeed could not be reflected in proceedings of this nature, so as to convey an adequate idea of them, to persons at a distance. The monstrous impudence of a foreign emissary, springing from a starving population of millions, and coming forward to excite to insurrection and massacre, one better fed and better clothed, in every respect, is unparalleled in any age of the world. We do not apprehend any immediate danger from these efforts, but let it be remembered that vigilance is the parent of safety, and this admonition is particularly addressed to those in authority. Captains of companies, in every beat, throughout the county, should detail PATROLS, for every night in the week, and see that they will do their duty efficiently. We will only detain the reader from the proceedings of the meeting to state, as it was stated in the meeting, that the original committee, by placing themselves on the Grand Committee, intended to show their fellow-citizens that they exacted no responsibility from them, which they were not willing to assume themselves.”

The report of the meeting was then made by Arthur F. Hopkins, a justice of the Alabama Supreme Court and a member of the committee. It began with a long preamble castigating “the efforts of NORTHERN FANATICS to excite our slaves to insurrection and butchery” but at the same time expressed disbelief that their Northern Brethren would sustain such action. It noted that the right to property in their slaves was not a question open to discussion and if it had been there would have been no constitution, and much more. Then followed eight numbered resolutions, the first five confirming the above sentiments, and Resolution 6, which named 160 persons to a Grand Committee of Vigilance consisting of 16 sub-committees or divisions. The Committee was charged with the duty “to arrest and bring to punishment all accessories of the abolition societies and other suspicious persons; to suppress the circulation of all inflammatory publications calculated to excite an insurrectionary spirit amongst our slaves, and to take such other measures as may by them be deemed necessary to secure the public tranquility: and the committee shall be especially charged with these subjects and every consequence growing out of them.” And then, *inasmuch* as these eight resolutions were concerned with state’s rights and

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts
abolition in general, the committee added and recommended the adoption of the following unnumbered resolutions in relation to the other subject which agitates the community i.e., the recent events in Mississippi, "That we view common Gamblers as Vampires preying on the Vitals of Society.- That it be the duty of the Committee of Vigilance, to bring to punishment, such as, at this time, or may hereafter infest this Town and County, and that they deliver them to the Law, or act otherwise according to emergencies . . ." They then added two paragraphs from the law of the state that provided the death penalty for any free person that aided or persuaded the insurrection of slaves and for any person that distributed, circulated or published insurrectionary materials.

The *Southern Advocate* on September 1, 1835, also reported on a similar "large and most respectable meeting of the citizens of Triana, Alabama and the vicinity" on August 29 where a committee of 22 was appointed "to draft resolutions for the purpose of meeting a crisis growing out of the subject of Abolition, and other things which might involve the safety, and continue to disturb the peace of the community, if not met at the threshold." In addition, this edition of the *Southern Advocate* reported that the subject of abolition was taken into consideration at a quarterly meeting of the Methodist Conference of the Limestone Circuit on August 22, 1835 and the presiding elder appointed a committee to draft a set of resolutions touching the question. The resulting resolutions were drawn from their belief that abolition was unconstitutional, subversive and destructive to the interest and happiness of the country and would prove injurious to the cause of Christianity. The first resolution, however, decried the association of the name itinerant members with Clock Peddlers, Steam Doctors, etc. in the newspapers as "a calumny on the character of a highly respectable and eminently useful body of men, and a blow insidiously leveled by the spirit of infidelity at religion itself through its Ministers." The second of the five resolutions, in equally pious language, disavowed and deprecated any participation by members of the Methodist Episcopal Church with abolitionists or abolition principles and any compromise with vice or the companions of vice in any form.

Madison County was not alone in its response to the apparent crisis. The September 15, 1835, *Southern Advocate* published an account of a public meeting of the citizens of Somerville and Morgan County at the Courthouse in Somerville on September 5, 1835. Here also, abolition was of primary concern and Northern abolitionists were characterized in the first of five resulting resolutions as un-Christian, fanatical and even treasonable. The last and most significant resolution called for the establishment of a Committee of Vigilance whose duty was "to call on all suspected per-

sons for a satisfactory explanation of suspicious circumstances, and who shall cause to be arrested all persons who violate the statute against seditious writings.” The last was punishable by state statute with death. The resolutions were unanimously adopted and 68 persons were appointed to the Committee which included four persons from each Captain’s beat and twelve from Somerville, which was then the county seat. Also reported in the September 15 *Advocate* was another general meeting in the town of Triana on September 5 which adopted the Preamble and Resolutions previously adopted by the Huntsville meeting upon recommendation of the Triana committee of 22.

Although the citizenry remained apprehensive for the remainder of the year, no insurrections were reported in Madison County. Responding to rumors of a contemplated insurrection in the northwestern part of the county, the Grand Committee of Vigilance announced at a meeting in Huntsville on November 26, 1835 that after a full investigation of the facts and circumstances surrounding these rumors there was no cause of alarm to the community at large, but the Committee recommended additional vigilance on the part of the public and the police.³¹ The Committee made additional recommendations in resolutions concerning the movements and communications between slaves. Concerned about the possibility of a disturbance during the Christmas season, the Committee of Vigilance of the Whitesburg and Pond beats, one of the 16 sub-committees of the Grand Committee, met on December 11, 1835, and unanimously adopted even more restrictive regulations on their slaves.³²

In his analysis, Dupre writes, “No rebellion materialized in Madison County; the committees patrolled the countryside, but there is no record of their having arrested anyone, white or black. That very little happened in Madison County does not diminish the importance of the insurrection scare of 1835. The threat had been real to the white citizens of the county, as the outpouring of editorials and the resolutions of the committees revealed. Actually, the very uneventfulness of Madison County’s experience was more typical of the South in 1835 than was the violence in Mississippi.”³³ (Aptheker, however, notes the hanging of a white man that summer near Lynchburg, Virginia, for attempting to interest slaves in an uprising and the lynching of three whites in Aiken, South Carolina, and Jefferson County, Georgia, for seditious activity.)³⁴ Dupre continues, “The language of the editorials and committee resolutions reveals two significant facts. First, the focus of concern among the citizens of Madison County and the South in general was the abolitionist movement, not an indigenous uprising of slaves. Second, the depictions of both Murrell and the abolitionists were filled with images of conspiracies, of deception and manipulation that threat-

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts ened both community order and the people's liberty."³⁵ And we can conclude that the scare certainly enhanced the South's concern with abolitionism that became more militant with the establishment of Garrison's *Liberator* in 1831.

John Brown: John Brown's Raid received broad coverage in the October 26, 1859, *Southern Advocate* with dispatches and editorials from Baltimore, dated October 17, 18 and 21; from Harper's Ferry, dated October 19, 20 and 21; from Washington, D.C, dated October 18, 19 and 21; and from Philadelphia, dated October 22. The *Advocate's* own editorial on the next page provided a short and general summary of the incident:

"We give full telegraphic details of this rash and bold attempt at insurrection in Virginia at Harper's Ferry. It was concocted by Brown, assisted by advice and means furnished by prompt abolitionists in the North. It was confined to whites and free negroes – no slaves appear to have been engaged willingly in it, and they did not join the traitors as expected. Arms and ammunition were provided by Brown, and his expectations were that a general rush of fanatics to his standard would take place and that there would be a vast uprising of slaves in Virginia and Maryland. The prompt action of the authorities of Virginia and of the General Government are worthy of all praise. Mr. Buchanan, at once, ordered the laws to be enforced; the insurrection to be suppressed by armed force; the traitors to be seized wherever found. Now that it has been suppressed, let the traitors have a short shrift and a speedy hanging. This attempt is directly traceable to the abolitionists: Giddings, Stewart, Gerritt Smith, Sumner, &c., are more guilty than Brown and his deluded followers.³⁶ They are the real culprits. – The blood that has been shed and that of the victims who will suffer at the rope's end, attaches to them alone. They are the great criminals, We trust the letters found in Brown's house and now in the hands of Gov. Wise, will affix legal guilt upon them, so they may be tried for inciting rebellion."

This was followed by a statement from the Washington correspondent of the *Cincinnati Gazette* concerning the papers found with Brown. The papers gave details of his arms and equipment purchases and indicated "that the conspiracy of which he was the head and front, has an extensive

organization in various states.” The correspondent concluded, “There can be no doubt that his grand aim was to create a general servile insurrection.”

On another page the paper presented a long, undated commentary on “Free Negroes” from the *Weekly Southern Era* of Opelika, Alabama, and recommended it for consideration of the next Legislature. In conspicuously racist language, the commentary elucidated a number of “facts” and suggested that the Alabama legislature at its next session, pass a law forbidding the presence of free negroes in the State. It is apparent that abolitionists and free negroes were usually blamed for instigating these insurrections. Huntsville’s Board of Alderman also did its part by passing on December 6, 1859, an ordinance (Appendix III) to expel some of its own free negroes from the city.

The *Southern Advocate* published no further remarks on the Brown affair until December 7, 1859 when it printed an editorial from the *Charleston Mercury* which criticized the excessive military display ordered by Virginia’s Governor Wise at Brown’s execution on December 2 as detrimental to the South. On December 14, 1859, the *Advocate* presented its final comments in a story entitled, “Let Quiet, not Agitation Prevail.”

“Our readers will bear witness that we have not filled the columns of the *Advocate* with the thousand and one rumors about the miscreant John Brown, nor aided in making a hero or martyr of him. He has been hung as he ought to have been the day after the jury convicted him. His fellow criminals are to be hung on the 16th, as they deserve to – Let them be hung, and let that be the end of the matter with us. And let all their imitators and aiders be served in the same way. – We commend the observations of the *Baltimore American* as being the common sense opinions of the public to our readers.”

The *Baltimore American* also condemned Virginia’s handling of the execution.

Villains or Heroes – the Continuing Controversy

In spite of the many incidents of insurrection prior to the abolition of slavery, the prevalent view of historians up until the mid 1930s was the white Southern view that the American slave in the plantation economy was docile and submissive. It was then that a group of revisionist historians, including Herbert Aptheker, began to challenge the conventional wisdom. The distinguished contemporary historian of slavery, Eugene Genovese, wrote many years later, “More than any other scholar Herbert

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts

Apthecker, in his *American Negro Slave Revolts* and pioneering essays, argued for a revolutionary tradition among the slaves. He demolished the legend of the contented slave, which Ulrich Bonnell Phillips³⁷ especially promoted . . .”³⁸ And in a book on this subject published earlier this year, Scot French, a professor of African-American studies at the University of Virginia writes, “In 1860, there were four million slaves in the United States. By December 1865, there were none. The abolition of slavery secured by federal armies on the Civil War battlefield and formalized in the Thirteenth Amendment, made both slavery and slave rebellions relics of the past. Yet the rebellious slave, as a symbol of black aspirations to freedom and equality remained a formidable presence on the social and cultural landscape of the nation long after slavery’s destruction.”³⁹ In this section of the paper it will seen that the symbolism of some of the incidents considered here continues to reverberate in fact, in fiction and in folklore up to the present day.

Gabriel Prosser: The following story about Gabriel Prosser by staff writer, Julian Walker, appeared in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* of October 11, 2004:

“More than two centuries ago, Gabriel, a blacksmith and indentured servant, organized what was to have been one of the largest slave revolts in American history, only to see foul weather and betrayal foil his plans. For leading the plot, Gabriel was executed Oct. 10, 1800 at the Richmond gallows.

Yesterday evening, a crowd including scholars and members of the civic group that lobbied for a city memorial to Gabriel - sometimes called Prosser’s Gabriel or Gabriel Prosser in reference to his Henrico County owner - walked to the intersection of North 15th and East Broad streets for its unveiling. The air was thick with the smell of incense and the sound of African drums as the walkers approached.

The ‘Execution of Gabriel’ historical highway marker denotes the site where Prosser was hanged.

‘Oh my God, it’s beautiful,’ said Ana Edwards, a founder of the Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality group which lobbied for the marker. ‘This is a tremendous symbol. Gabriel Prosser is an inspiration for attempting to do something that monumental at a time when resources for slaves were phenomenally low.’

A seminar about Gabriel was held at Centenary United Methodist Church, 411 E. Grace St., earlier yesterday. . . . Among the speakers at that event was Haskell H. Bingham, a great-great-grandson of Gabriel and a retired Virginia State University administrator. . . .”

Denmark Vesey: It was evidently a coincidence that three new books on Denmark Vesey were published in 1999.^{40,41,42} Recognizing this anomaly, *The William & Mary Quarterly* arranged for a review which was published in the October 2001 *Quarterly* in “Forum: The Making of a Slave Conspiracy, part 1.”⁴³ In an introduction to the Forum, Robert A. Gross, Book Review Editor of the *Quarterly* writes, “Scholars have found in the Vesey conspiracy a testament to African-American resistance to slavery and a revealing glimpse into the world of black Charlestonians during the early republic. In this spirit, three books on Denmark Vesey and his abortive uprising appeared in 1999. Why this sudden upsurge of interest? To address this question and assess the books, *The William and Mary Quarterly* commissioned Michael P. Johnson of Johns Hopkins University to write a review essay. That assignment acquired a life of its own.”

Johnson opens his review essay with the following words: “In the pantheon of rebels against slavery in the United States, Denmark Vesey stands exalted.” He then goes on to explain how historians had since 1822 considered Denmark Vesey to be a heroic figure and “a bold insurrectionist determined to free his people or die trying.” But after beginning the review, he came to believe that historians were wrong about the conspiracy. In the background investigation for his evaluation, Johnson looked at the original court transcripts which exist in manuscript in the South Carolina State archives. He found significant differences with the Official Report of the Trial Record which was used by virtually all previous historians and the authors of the three current volumes. The Official Report was apparently seriously flawed. Among other discrepancies, Johnson found that the original transcripts showed that the blacks confessed to a conspiracy only after being beaten and tortured and that the coerced confessions mirrored newspaper accounts and rumors in Charleston about the rebellion in Haiti (Saint Domingue) in 1791. Johnson, after a detailed analysis, concluded “not only that Vesey was innocent of organizing a slave rebellion, but also that, in fact, no rebellion conspiracy ever existed—except in the frightened minds

of white slaveholders, who, Johnson argues, coerced testimony from a handful of slaves and free blacks to convict Vesey and the others."⁴⁴

Johnson also found that Edward Pearson, editor of one of the volumes, *Designs Against Charleston: The Trial Record of the Denmark Vesey Slave Conspiracy of 1822*, had made errors in transcribing and copying the records. Because of these errors and the issues Professor Johnson had raised about the accuracy of the "trial record," the University of North Carolina Press had discontinued printing of the book.

Dr. Gross's statement that the assignment had acquired a life of its own refers to the fact that Johnson's findings were not accepted by all experts and had also raised questions about the written history of slavery and slave resistance. Accordingly, the *William and Mary Quarterly* invited the authors of the three Vesey books and five distinguished historians to comment on the controversy. These essays and Michael Johnson's "last word" appeared in the January 2002 *Quarterly* in a *Forum: The Making of a Slave Conspiracy, part 2*.⁴⁵ The controversy was also reported in the weekly magazine *The Nation* and *The New York Times*.^{46,47}

In his essay, Professor Pearson apologized for the mistakes he had made in the transcribed record but insisted that "the accompanying analysis based on my reading and consideration of the evidence stands, I believe, as a sound piece of scholarship that contributes not just to an understanding of the plot itself, but also to the historiography on the antebellum South and urban slavery."⁴⁸ And whether or not there was an actual conspiracy, Pearson points out in his book that during the 1960s, civil rights workers invoked Vesey as a founding figure in the struggle for black freedom. He also makes some interesting observations about its cultural impact:

The conspiracy and its leader have also inspired artists, including several musicians, who have memorialized the events of 1822. Composer and author Paul Bowles, best known for his novel "The Sheltering Sky," wrote an opera based on the plot in 1937. Fifty years later, Charleston native Thomas Cabaniss followed in Bowles's footsteps, writing an opera called "Denmark Vesey." The plot also attracted the attention of one of the nation's greatest songwriters and composers. George Gershwin, who drew heavily on the folktales and language of low country blacks for "Porgy and Bess," began work on a libretto with collaborator DuBose Heyward for a musical drama about Vesey. After Gershwin's death in 1937 and Heyward's three years later, Dorothy Heyward eventually completed the work as a play called "Set My People Free," which opened on Broadway in 1948. More recently,

Australian composer Vincent Plush premiered a piece entitled Denmark Vesey Takes the Stand that drew on the trial record as well as Heyward's play, using voices, instruments, and theatrical devices to recreate the last days of Vesey and his fellow insurgents.⁴⁹

Nat Turner: The history of American slave revolts is characterized by unproven superlatives, e.g., the largest in history, the most extensive, the bloodiest and/or the most famous. The Nat Turner revolt certainly merits consideration for the latter two characterizations. Noting that Turner's celebrity has vacillated over the years, Scot French, author of the most recent and comprehensive analysis of the Turner revolt and its historic image, writes:

"The changing image of Nat Turner mirrored the shifting ideologies of black and white Americans as they grappled with the social revolution wrought by emancipation. Conservative black leaders of the post-Reconstruction era, who assigned themselves the task of 'uplifting the race,' emphasized the education and high moral character of 'Old Prophet Nat' rather than the violent acts of murder and mayhem that characterized the rebellion itself. They depicted the rebel leader as an American patriot and a Christian martyr. More radical black leaders, rising to the fore at the turn of the century, adopted Turner as a symbol of 'New Negro' assertiveness in the face of white racism and mob violence."⁵⁰

White Southerners, for the most part, considered the Turner and other revolts as aberrations and held on to their belief in the faithful and docile slave. French also questions whether Turner's original "confession" was a precise transcription, and suggests that it might have been altered to downplay the hysteria and extent of the rebellion.

Nat Turner's "memory" persisted over the years: A few months after the beginning of the Civil War, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a strong abolitionist and supporter of John Brown, published a short history of Nat Turner in the *Atlantic Monthly*.⁵¹ There was considerable debate on Nat Turner among blacks in the 1880s, and in 1889 "two black newspapers engaged in a debate over whether it was more appropriate to build a statue to white hero – John Brown – or a black one – Turner."⁵² William S. Drewry, a native of Southampton County, Virginia, published the first book-length study of the Turner rebellion in 1900.⁵³

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts

The 100th anniversary of the Nat Turner insurrection, 1931, coincided with two other singular events: the beginning of the trials of the Scottsboro Boys and the depths of the Great Depression of the 1930s. The Communist Party saw the case as providing a great recruiting tool among southern blacks and northern liberals and in the June 6, 1931 edition of *The Liberator*, a publication of an organization of black Communists, Cyril Briggs tried to relate Turner to black struggles of 1931.⁵⁴ The party, through its legal arm, the International Labor Defense (ILD), pronounced the case against the Scottsboro Boys a “murderous frame-up” and began efforts, ultimately successful, to be named as their attorneys. The trial went on for more than six years coinciding, but not connected with, the beginnings of the revisionist, rebellious slave history. And as noted by Scot French, “By the mid-1930s, a small cadre of revisionist scholars, writers, artists, and activists was mass-producing counter-images of Nat Turner as black American patriot and working class hero. Their work anticipated the emergence of a mass movement against Jim Crow after world War II and the ‘Negro Revolt’ of the 1960s.”⁵⁵

In 1960, four black college students began sit-ins at a lunch counter of a Greensboro, North Carolina, restaurant where black patrons were not served. The turbulent decade continued with demonstrations, riots and violence including the assassinations of Malcolm X in 1965 and Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. In his autobiography which was published shortly after his death, Malcolm X wrote, “I read about the slave preacher Nat Turner, who put the fear of God into the white slavemaster. Nat Turner wasn’t going around preaching pie-in-the-sky and ‘non-violent’ freedom for the black man. . . . Somewhere I have read where Nat Turner’s example is said to have inspired John Brown to invade Virginia and attack Harper’s Ferry nearly thirty years later, with thirteen white men and five Negroes.”⁵⁶

In the middle of August, 1965, an incident between traffic police and pedestrians developed into two days of spontaneous riots in the Watts area of Los Angeles. The summer of 1967 saw devastating riots in many cities including Newark and Detroit. William Styron’s novel, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, was published in the fall of that year and received much attention because of the racial situation at the time.⁵⁷ The book received rave reviews, became an immediate bestseller and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1968. Styron’s book, however, provoked a bitter response from some of the black community which continues to the present day and is described in many sources including the recent books by Scot French³⁹ and Kenneth S. Greenberg,⁵⁸ a PBS documentary broadcast on February 10, 2004,⁵⁹ and an article in *The New York Times*.⁶⁰ The dispute also killed plans by Twentieth Century Fox to film the novel. Scot French summarizes the controversy as follows:

“The October 1967 publication of William Styron’s novel *The Confessions of Nat Turner* returned the rebellious slave to broad public consciousness and spurred the most intense debate over Turner’s memory since the era of Reconstruction. . . . The black backlash against the novel, culminating in a volume of essays (*William Styron’s Confessions of Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond*),⁶¹ overshadowed the protests of white Southern partisans who complained that Styron had defamed *their* ancestors and distorted *their history*. Styron’s efforts to create a common history, merging the perspectives of slave and slaveholder, satisfied the descendants of neither. To this day, the Styron controversy remains a focal point for historians and literary critics interested in race, memory, and the cultural politics of the civil rights and Black Power eras.”⁶²

Another look at the Turner controversy was provided by Pulitzer prize-winning journalist and author, Tony Horwitz, in a 1999 article for the “A Reporter At Large” section of *The New Yorker Magazine*.⁶³ Horwitz visited Southampton County and interviewed residents of both races including some with familial connections to the tragedy. He found attitudes that varied from indifference to bitterness, and the bitterness of the local whites had contributed to the sinking of the Hollywood plans to film Styron’s novel. The whites particularly resented “Styron’s unflattering depiction of their forbears as ‘brandy-fragrant, sun-scorched, snaggle-mouthed, anus-scratching farmers’ and also feared ‘the film might inflame the tense racial atmosphere in Southampton which was then in the midst of turbulent integration.’”⁶⁴

Horwitz interviewed several other important “players” including Styron, Mike Thelwell and Vincent Harding, two of the “Ten Black Writers,” and Scot French. Horwitz had apparently thought about writing a book on Turner and had visited Southampton County before, in 1995. During that visit, he had talked to Gilbert Francis who had co-produced a documentary on Turner for the Southampton County Historical Society. Francis was a descendant of a family that was massacred in the rebellion and when Fox was planning to film Styron’s novel in the 1960s, Francis had been the principal liaison between Hollywood and the local community and had demanded changes in the script. Horwitz interviewed Styron at the Connecticut farmhouse where he has lived since 1955 and learned of his thoughts on the issue after thirty years. Styron told him he believed, “critics rejected the entire exercise of a white man’s writing from a slave’s perspective,” and in this sense, French thought “he unwittingly created one of the first politically incorrect

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts texts.”⁶⁵ Horwitz also extensively interviewed Scot French who told him some of what he had learned in the five years that he had spent researching both the Turner revolt and the way it was remembered. French hoped to publish his work the next year but his fine book wasn't published until 2004. Some of his last words on the subject were, “We'll never lay this story to rest.”⁶⁶

Our last two subjects, John Murrell and John Brown, have also enjoyed celebrity in the literature and elsewhere. Murrell's legend was publicized after Virgil Stewart's 1835 book in 1847 editions of the *National Police Gazette*. Mark Twain mentions him in Chapter 26 of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and devotes most of Chapter 29 of *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) to Murrell. A sketch of Murrell by James L Penick appears in *American National Biography* wherein he mentions the above sources and another book by Robert M. Coates, *The Outlaw Years: The History of the Land Pirates of the Natchez Trace* (1930). Penick also states that, “The only scholarly treatment to date is James L. Penick, *The Great Western Land Pirate: John A. Murrell in Legend and History*.”⁶⁷

John Brown's life and legend have been documented in song and story, films and a PBS documentary. Most notable are the song “John Brown's Body,” sung to “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” Stephen Vincent Benet's poem of the same name, and Stephen B. Oates 1970 biography.⁶⁸ A popular reggae band now also bears the name, John Brown's Body. Harper's Ferry National Historic Park was established May 29, 1963. John Brown's Fort (the Harper's Ferry Armory) was acquired by the National Park Service in 1960 and the restored building was moved back to the Lower Town in 1968. Because the fort's original site was covered with a railroad embankment in 1894, the building now sits about 150 feet east of its original location.

The continued importance and significance of the present subject was emphasized in 1968 by the establishment of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition, a part of the Yale Center for International and Area Studies. The Center is “dedicated to the investigation and dissemination of information concerning all aspects of the Atlantic slave system and its destruction. It seeks to foster an improved understanding of the role of slavery, slave resistance, and abolition in the founding of the modern world by promoting interaction and exchange be-

tween scholars engaged in research in each of these distinct areas, and by assisting in the translation of scholarly information into public knowledge through publications, educational outreach and other programs and events.”⁶⁹

APPENDIX I

Daniel Robinson Alexander Campbell Hundley was born December 11, 1832 in Limestone County, Alabama. His father, John Henderson Hundley, of Halifax County, Virginia, moved to Alabama where he was a planter and also a minister and a physician. It is noted that “Daniel Hundley himself was a patrician who believed one’s highest calling was to be a gentleman.”⁷⁰ After graduating from Bacon College in Kentucky in 1850, he entered law school at the University of Virginia and then at Harvard where he received his law degree in 1853. He married his first cousin, Mary Ann Hundley of Virginia that year, and moved to Chicago primarily to manage his father-in-law’s financial holdings, a task for which he was apparently not too well suited. Before he returned to Alabama in November 1860, Hundley contributed two articles on public affairs in *Hunt’s Merchant Magazine*, a popular periodical of the day, and these lead to his publication of *Social Relations in our Southern States* wherein his purpose was to defend, justify and provide an accurate picture of the South.

Alabama seceded from the Union on January 11, 1861, deepening the prospects for war, and Hundley wrote to Governor Wise on January 21 asking him “to accept my services and to give me a commission.” Nothing apparently came of this request but on May 14, four days before the “startling news” of May 18, he writes that he had drawn up papers for a proposed rifle company to be called the Beauregard Rifles and the next day purchased a copy of *Hardee’s Tactics*⁷¹ (for \$1.35) so that he might learn something of the art of war preparatory to the labors he soon expected to begin. He continued his planning and recruiting until August 10 when his company was activated in Memphis, Tennessee, under Col. John D. Martin as Company D, 1st Mississippi Regiment which name was soon changed to the 25th Mississippi Regiment. The name was changed again to 2nd Confederate Infantry on January 31, 1862 and then it was disbanded and reconstituted as a part of the 55th Alabama Infantry after Shiloh. Captain Hundley, however, missed the “blooding” of this regiment at Shiloh as he had, on December 12, 1861, made application to Gen. John S. Bowen, the Division commander, for a recommendation to Gen. Polk for authority to raise a regiment. He was subsequently given command of the 31st Alabama Infantry which participated in the campaign in East Tennessee in the

<https://louis.uah.edu/huntsville-historical-review/vol30/iss1/4>

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts
Spring of 1862. His regiment was ordered to Vicksburg in the winter of 1862 and fought with distinction at the battle of Chickasaw Bayou and at Port Gibson where he was wounded. The regiment later fought gallantly in the Atlanta Campaign where Hundley was captured and sent to Johnson's Island. His experiences at this Confederate Officers military prison, and his exciting and almost successful escape are described in his book, *Prison Echoes of the Great Rebellion*.¹⁴

After the war, Hundley returned to the family home in Mooresville, Alabama. He practiced law once again and edited *The North Alabama Reporter* in Huntsville for a short time. He also served as Solicitor in Lawrence County, Alabama. His most enduring contribution and legacy, however, is *Social Relations in Our Southern States*. In his introduction to the L.S.U. Press Reprint, Cooper writes that Hundley "hoped that an analysis of the South by a Southerner who admitted 'there is much in the Slave States to call forth unqualified approbation, or equally unqualified denunciation' would spark Northerners and Englishmen to view the South rationally and to realize they had nothing to fear from it."⁷² Cooper also notes that, "Although contemporaries paid little attention to *Social Relations*, it has become an invaluable source for students of the antebellum South."⁷³ WorldCat, the worldwide union catalog available on the Internet through FirstSearch, indicates that "*Social Relations in our Southern States*" is available in hundreds of libraries worldwide. It is available in Great Britain, for example, at the British Library, the National Library of Scotland, the University College of London and the universities at Oxford, Cambridge, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Durham, and New Castle. A recent study of southern intellectual history by Michael O'Brien, Reader in American Intellectual History at Jesus College, Cambridge, devotes many pages to Hundley's analysis of the social structure of the antebellum South. O'Brien writes, "Few Southerners, in fact, ever wrote in a concerted way about social structure. They produced reams about race, gender, politics, and religion, but class did not often seem worth a sustained analysis. The great exception was Daniel R. Hundley, who published in 1860 a book called *Social Relations in Our Southern States*."⁷⁴

Daniel was not the only prominent member of the Hundley family. His nephew Oscar Richard Hundley (1854-1921) was Huntsville City Attorney 1882-1884, a member of the Alabama state legislature 1886-1887, the Alabama senate 1890-1897 and was appointed U.S District Judge 1902-1903. He was responsible for the building of two of Huntsville's architectural gems: the elegant circa 1900 residence at 401 Madison Street and the building at 128 South Side Square formerly known as the Hundley Building.

Published by LOUIS,

The Historic Huntsville Foundation, however, decided to rewrite history by renaming the building after its founding chairman, renowned architect and preservationist, Harvie P. Jones, who had researched the building and drafted preliminary plans for its restoration before his death in December 1998.

APPENDIX II

AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A NIGHT WATCH AND PATROL*

Be it ordained by the Mayor and Alderman of Huntsville, That a Night Watch and Patrol of two discreet and vigilant persons, shall be established for the purpose of guarding and patrolling the Town at night, under the following rules and regulations, viz:

1st. It shall be the duty of the Watchmen to ring the bell of the courthouse at 10 o'clock, P. M. precisely; at which time they shall commence their tour of duty, and patrol all the streets and alleys of the town until break of day — crying the hours and half hours thro'out the night

2nd. It shall be their duty to arrest and put in jail, all coloured persons whether bond or free, whom they may find from their proper lodgings after the commencement of the Watch; unless the Watch are satisfied that they are upon business of emergency — in which case it shall be their duty to see them to their proper quarters.

3rd. It shall be their duty to report, or, at their discretion, to arrest all disorderly white persons, hold them in custody, and bring them before the Mayor in the morning, to be dealt with according to law.

4th. It shall further be their duty to enter any enclosure or house, where there may be an unlawful assembly of persons of colour.

All slaves committed to jail by the Watch under this ordinance, shall be liberated in the morning upon their master's paying the sum of one dollar to the jailer; and in case of his neglect or his refusal to do so, the said slave shall receive fifteen lashes to upon his bare back, to be inflicted by the constable, and then be discharged.

All free persons of colour committed to jail under this ordinance, shall be fined at the discretion of the Mayor in a sum not exceeding ten dollars; and be held in custody until the same is paid.

All fines collected under this ordinance, shall accrue to the Corporation.

The Night Watch and Patrol shall be appointed for the term of three months, in the first instance; and afterwards for such length of time as the

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts
Board may agree upon. They shall receive such compensation quarterly as may be stipulated by the Board — shall be liable to be dismissed at all times; and in case of neglect of duty shall forfeit their back pay in part, or in whole at the discretion of the Board.

Teste: PEYTON S. WYATT, *Clerk.*
AN ORDINANCE SUPPLEMENTAL To ORDINANCE NO. 21

Be it ordained by the Mayor and Alderman of Huntsville, That from and after the 15th of November next, it shall be unlawful for any free person of colour to hire a slave, or keep a hired slave about his, her or their premises, under a penalty not exceeding twenty dolls. For every such offence; and the continuance thereof for one week after a recovery under this ordinance, shall be considered a new offence.

And be it further ordained, That all such free persons of colour so offending, shall be committed to jail until the fine assessed them shall be paid.

Teste: PEYTON S. WYATT, *Clerk.*

*Minutes of Huntsville Board of Aldermen, page 155, 12 October 1831.

APPENDIX III

An Ordinance for the Removal of Free Persons of Color Out of the Huntsville Who Have Immigrated to this State since the First of February 1832.**

Sec. 1. Be it Ordained by the Mayor and Alderman of the Corporation of Huntsville, that from and after the first day of January, 1860, it shall not be lawful for any free person of color, who has removed within this State since the first day of February, 1832, to reside or live within the Corporate limits of the Town of Huntsville, and any person or persons being found, within its limits after that time, either as a resident or a hireling, shall be arrested and brought before the Mayor who upon proof of the charge, shall assess a fine of twenty dollars against him or her, and upon failure to pay the same, he or she shall be sentenced to imprisonment in the jail above for twenty days, or ordered to work on the streets of the corporation for one month, at the discretion of the Mayor, and for a second offence, shall in

addition to a fine of twenty dollars, receive on his or her bare back, twenty-nine lashes, with the like penalty for any subsequent violation till he or she remove.

**Minutes of Huntsville Board of Aldermen, Page 319, December 6, 1859.

ENDNOTES

¹Clarence Edward Carter, Editor, *Territorial Papers of the United States*, Vol. VI. (Mississippi), p. 299.

²Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts*, (NY: International Publishers, 1993), p. 162.

³William Warren Rogers, Robert David Ward, Leah Rawls Atkins, Wayne Flynt, *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State* Tuscaloosa : University of Alabama Press, 1994), p. 109.

⁴Aptheker., pp. 354, 357.

⁵Laura A. White, *The South in the 1850's as Seen by British Consuls*, (The Journal of Southern History, 1935), I, p. 47.

⁶Frank Moore, Editor, *The Rebellion Record: a Diary of American Events*, (NY: Arno Press, 1977), Vol. I., p. 12.

⁷William L. Barney, *The Secessionist Impulse, Alabama and Mississippi in 1860*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 172,173.

⁸Fred Hobson, *Tell About the South – The Southern Rage to Explain*, (Baton Rouge & London: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), p. 67.

⁹Robert Henry Walker, Jr., *History of Limestone County*, (Limestone County Commission, 1973), pp. 118-120.

¹⁰Charles Rice, *Hard Times –The Civil War in Huntsville and North Alabama*, (Old Huntsville, Inc., 1994), pp. 16-21

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts

¹¹Madison County Commissioner Court Minutes 1856-1861. These volumes are held in the Madison County Records Center in the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library.

¹²These men may be the free negro, Jacobs, and the “old English abolitionist” mentioned in Hundley’s diary entry for May 25, 1861. No other record (census etc.) were found for these individuals.

¹³Apthecker, p. 159.

¹⁴Daniel R. Hundley, *Prison Echoes of the Great Rebellion*, (NY: S.W. Green, Printer, 1874).

¹⁵Daniel R. Hundley, *Social Relations in our Southern States*, (Baton Rouge & London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979, 1960) Reprint of the H. B. Price 1860 Edition. Edited, with an Introduction by William J. Cooper Jr.

¹⁶Blanche Henry Clark Weaver, *D. R. Hundley: Subjective Sociologist*, (Athens: Georgia Review, University of Georgia, X., Summer, 1956), p. 75.

¹⁷Hobson, p. 75.

¹⁸Apthecker, p. 163. The revolt occurred in a Spanish colony whose probable location was at or near the mouth of the Pedee River in what is now South Carolina.

¹⁹Apthecker, p.219.

²⁰Frances Cabaniss Roberts, *Background and Formative Period in the Great Bend and Madison County*, (A Dissertation, 1956) p. 233. A copy of *The Madison Gazette, October 19, 1813*, American Antiquarian Society Library, Worcester, Mass., is labeled Vol. II, No. 73, which indicates that Vol. I, No.1, would have been published in June, 1812.

²¹The American Colonization Society (ACS) was formed in 1817 to send free African-Americans to Africa as an alternative to emancipation in the United States. In 1822, the society established on the west coast of Africa a colony that in 1847 became the independent nation of Liberia. By 1867, the society had sent more than 13,000 emigrants. Beginning in the 1830s, the society was harshly attacked by abolitionists, who tried to discredit

colonization as a slaveholder's scheme. And, after the Civil War, when many blacks wanted to go to Liberia, financial support for colonization had waned. During its later years the society focused on educational and missionary efforts in Liberia rather than emigration and dissolved in 1964.

²²David Walker (1785-1830) was an African American abolitionist who wrote a famous antislavery pamphlet, *An Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*, in 1829 which urged American slaves to fight for their freedom. Its publication marked the beginning of the radical antislavery movement in the United States.

²³*The Liberator* was the weekly newspaper of abolitionist crusader, William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879) for 35 years (Jan. 1, 1831-Dec. 29, 1865). It was the most influential antislavery periodical in the pre-Civil War period and represented a change from Garrison's previous philosophy of gradual emancipation to immediate and militant abolitionism.

²⁴Betty Fladeland, *James Gillespie Birney: Slaveholder to Abolitionist*, (Ithica, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1955). James G. Birney was born in Danville, Kentucky, in 1792. Birney graduated from Princeton University in 1810, studied law in Philadelphia and opened a practice in Danville in 1814. He won election to the Kentucky legislature in 1816 and in 1818 moved to Madison County, Alabama, a frontier area where land sales were booming. He established a large cotton plantation there near Triana and in 1819 was chosen for the Alabama state legislature where he was active in several areas including slavery issues. After several unsuccessful cotton harvests, he sold his plantation and most of his 28 slaves and opened a law office in Huntsville in 1823. Birney was elected 5th circuit solicitor in 1823, Huntsville alderman in 1828 and Huntsville mayor in 1829. At first an advocate of gradual emancipation and a supporter of the American Colonization Society, his views changed over the years and he publicly endorsed immediate emancipation after he left Huntsville. He was elected executive secretary of the American Anti-Slavery Society (founded by William Lloyd Garrison), in 1837. This Society split soon afterward, one faction advocating the Garrison's inflammatory approach and the other, which became the Liberty Party, emphasizing electoral activity. Birney was the Liberty Party's presidential candidate in 1840 and 1844.

²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 48,49.

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts

²⁶Steam doctor was the name applied to certain medical practitioners in the early 1800s who espoused the medicinal value of botanicals and the Indian practice of using steam treatment to cure various ailments.

²⁷Daniel S. Dupre, *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*, (Baton Rouge & London: Louisiana State University Press, 1997).

²⁸Apthecker, pp. 325-329.

²⁹Dupre, p. 226.

³⁰Ibid., p. 227.

³¹*Southern Advocate*, December 1, 1835

³²Ibid., December 16, 1835

³³Dupre, p. 230.

³⁴Apthecker, p. 327

³⁵Dupre, p. 231.

³⁶Giddings, Joshua Reed (1795-1864), Ohio Congressman 1838-1859.

Stewart, Maria W. (1803-1879), A free Black political activist, author and lecturer.

Smith, Gerritt (1797-1884), A wealthy abolitionist who helped to found Liberty Party.

Sumner Charles (1811-1874), Massachusetts Senator 1851-1874.

³⁷Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, (New York, London, D. Appleton, 1918). Phillips, 1877-1934, was an authority on the antebellum South.

³⁸Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll; The World the Slaves Made*, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1974), p. 587.

³⁹Scot French, *The Rebellious Slave: Nat Turner in American Memory*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), p. 135.

⁴⁰Edward A Pearson, Editor, *Designs against Charleston: The Trial Record of the Denmark Vesey Slave Conspiracy of 1822*, (Chapel Hill, N.C., University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p. 7.

⁴¹Douglas R. Egerton, *He Shall Go Out Free: The Lives of Denmark Vesey*, (Madison, Madison House, 1999).

⁴²David Robertson, *Denmark Vesey: The Buried History of America's Largest Slave Rebellion* (N.Y., Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).

⁴³Michael P. Johnson, "Denmark Vesey and His Co-Conspirators," (The William & Mary Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 4, Oct. 2001.) pp. 915-976.

⁴⁴News Release – Office of News and Information, Johns Hopkins University, October 23, 2001.

Internet:<http://www.jhu.edu/newsinfo/news/home01/oct01/vesey.html>.

⁴⁵Forum: "The Making of a Slave Conspiracy, part 2," (The William and Mary Quarterly, Vol. 59, No.1, Jan. 2002.) pp. 135-202.

⁴⁶Jon Weiner, *Denmark Vesey: A New Verdict*, (N.Y., *The Nation*, March 11, 2002).
Internet:<http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml%3Fi=20020311&s=wiener>

⁴⁷Dinita Smith, *Challenging the History of a Slave Conspiracy*, (N.Y., *New York Times*, February 23, 2002).

Internet:<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/23/arts23TANK.html?ex=1100667600&en=dcaa687c4d16a650&ei=5070>

⁴⁸Forum, p. 139.

⁴⁹Pearson. p. 7.

⁵⁰French, p.135,136.

⁵¹Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Nat Turner's Insurrection*, (*Atlantic Monthly*, VIII August, 1861) pp 173-87. Higginson (1823-1911) became famous as Commander of a black regiment during the Civil War.

⁵²Eric Foner, Editor, *Nat Turner*, (N.J., Prentice-Hall,1971) p. 146.

⁵³William S. Drewry, *The Southampton Insurrection*, (Washington, D.C., 1900).

Shapiro: North Alabama's Response to the Fear and Facts of Slave Revolts
⁵⁴Foner, p. 158.

⁵⁵French, p. 136.

⁵⁶Malcolm X with Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, (N.Y., Grove Press)

⁵⁷William Styron, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, (N.Y., Random House, 1967).

⁵⁸Kenneth S. Greenberg, Editor, *Nat Turner : A Slave Rebellion in History and Memory*, (New York : Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁵⁹Frank Christopher and Kenneth S. Greenberg, Producers, *Nat Turner: A Troublesome Property*, VHS, 60 m., 2002 (Funding provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities)

⁶⁰Felicia R. Lee, *Nat Turner in History's Multiple Mirrors*, (N.Y., *New York Times*, February 7, 2004.

<http://www.wehaitians.com/nat%20turner%20in%20history%20multiple%20mirrors.html>.

⁶¹*William Styron's Confessions of Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond*, (Boston, Beacon Press, 1968).

⁶²French, p. 216.

⁶³Tony Horwitz, *Untrue Confessions: Is most of what we know about the rebel slave Nat Turner wrong?* (N.Y., *New Yorker Magazine*, December 13, 1999, pp. 80-89.

⁶⁴Ibid, p. 83.

⁶⁵Ibid, p. 84.

⁶⁶Ibid, p. 89

⁶⁷James L. Penick, *Murrell, John Andrews*, (N.Y., Oxford University Press, 1999), 16, pp. 177, 178.

⁶⁸Stephen B. Oates, *To Purge this Land With Blood: A biography of John Brown*, (NY,: Harper & Row, 1970).

⁶⁹From The Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition Internet: <http://www.yale.edu/glc/>

⁷⁰Hobson, p. 63.

⁷¹Joseph W. Hardee, *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics*, (Memphis, Southern Publishing House of Hutton & Freligh, 1861).

⁷²Hundley, *Social Relations* —, p. XXIV

⁷³Hundley, *Social Relations* —, p. XXV

⁷⁴Michael O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South*, (Chapel Hill, N.C., University of North Carolina Press, 2004), p. 379.