

Nat Turner's Rebellion (Intro) ^[1]

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In August 1831, a man named Nat Turner led an uprising of slaves in Southampton, Virginia, that resulted in the deaths of fifty-five whites and hundreds of blacks. In the weeks that followed, the fear of further slave insurrections spread across eastern North Carolina. Newspapers reported rumors as fact. White militias and mobs hunted down African Americans believed to be involved in insurrection plots and arrested or murdered them.

The primary sources in this chapter include newspaper articles, a letter, excerpts from a diary, and a memoir, all describing the events of Nat Turner's Rebellion and what followed in North Carolina. These sources are as interesting for what they *don't* tell us as for what they do. We'll evaluate the facts, opinions, and rumors they offer, and we'll trace the way fear and hysteria can spread through a community. We'll also consider where North Carolina stood as a slave society at the close of 1831.

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