

Hi, I'm  
Harriet.



# TALKING HISTORY

with

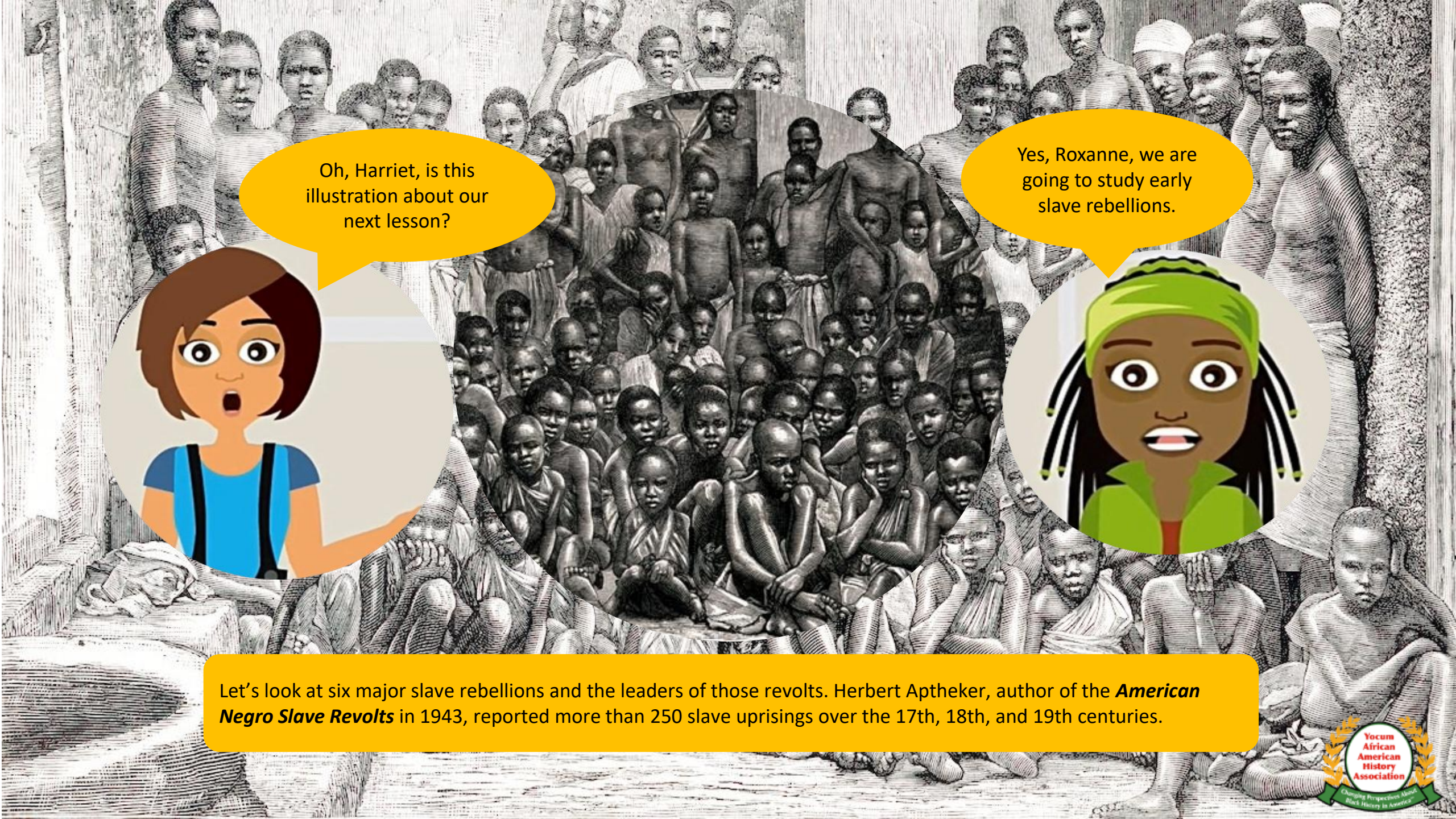
**Harriet and Roxanne™**

**Early Slave Rebellions**

And I'm  
Roxanne.  
Join us for...







Oh, Harriet, is this illustration about our next lesson?

Yes, Roxanne, we are going to study early slave rebellions.

Let's look at six major slave rebellions and the leaders of those revolts. Herbert Aptheker, author of the *American Negro Slave Revolts* in 1943, reported more than 250 slave uprisings over the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.







I want to know more!

I didn't realize that there were so many slave rebellions.




Slaves brought to America wanted freedom.

The desire for freedom was so great that slaves resisted capture on the shores of Africa, on ships, and again at their destinations.



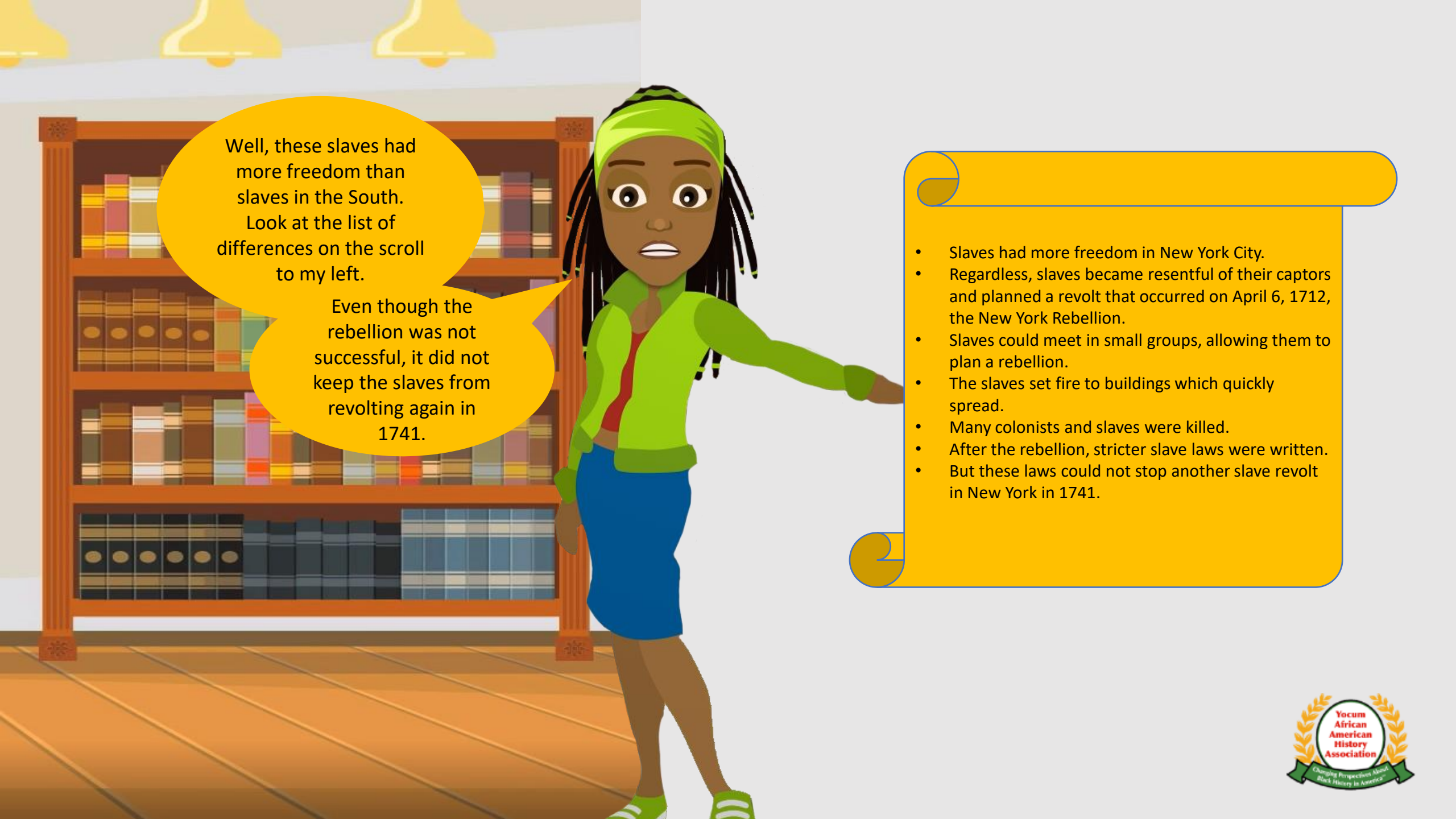




The New York Rebellion on April 6, 1712, is the first slave rebellion that we will study.

This rebellion was different from the rebellions in the South.

What made this rebellion different from others in the South?

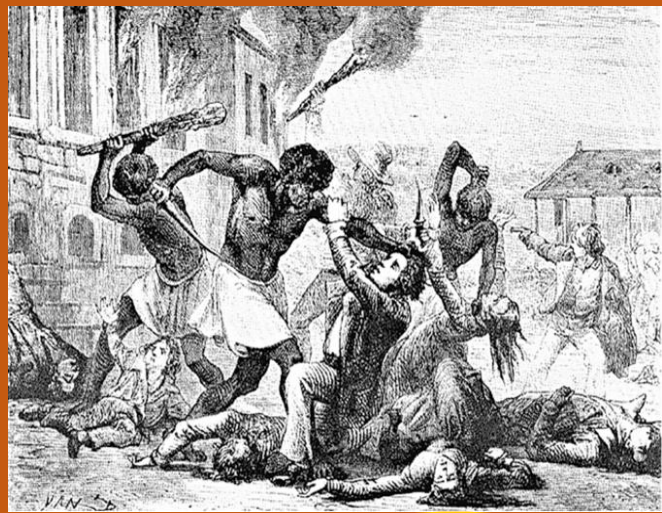


Well, these slaves had more freedom than slaves in the South. Look at the list of differences on the scroll to my left.

Even though the rebellion was not successful, it did not keep the slaves from revolting again in 1741.

- Slaves had more freedom in New York City.
- Regardless, slaves became resentful of their captors and planned a revolt that occurred on April 6, 1712, the New York Rebellion.
- Slaves could meet in small groups, allowing them to plan a rebellion.
- The slaves set fire to buildings which quickly spread.
- Many colonists and slaves were killed.
- After the rebellion, stricter slave laws were written.
- But these laws could not stop another slave revolt in New York in 1741.





Sometimes slaves were promised freedom for their services. For example, in 1739, the Stono Rebellion or Cato's Conspiracy was led by a literate slave named Jemmy, referred to as Cato. Spain was at war with England and promised freedom and land for slaves to come to Florida to fight England.



The march to Florida began in South Carolina with 80 slaves led by Cato. They were ambushed, and many were killed. After the rebellion, South Carolina changed some harsh punishments for slaves.

But, in 1740, the Negro Act was passed and further restricted slave's assembly, education, and movement.



Harriet, this looks like a city. What rebellion is this?




This is the New York Conspiracy or the Great Negro plot of 1741. This is the second rebellion caused by fear of a slave arsonist plot.

The government offered a reward and a pardon to anyone who would identify the culprits. So, a 16-year-old slave was promised freedom and money if she revealed these slaves. Thirty-one slaves were named, but no evidence was found to prove a conspiracy.







Roxanne, our next story is about Gabriel Prosser, a literate Virginia slave, and blacksmith, who led Gabriel's Rebellion in 1800. Because Gabriel could read, he wanted the freedom promised in the Declaration of Independence.

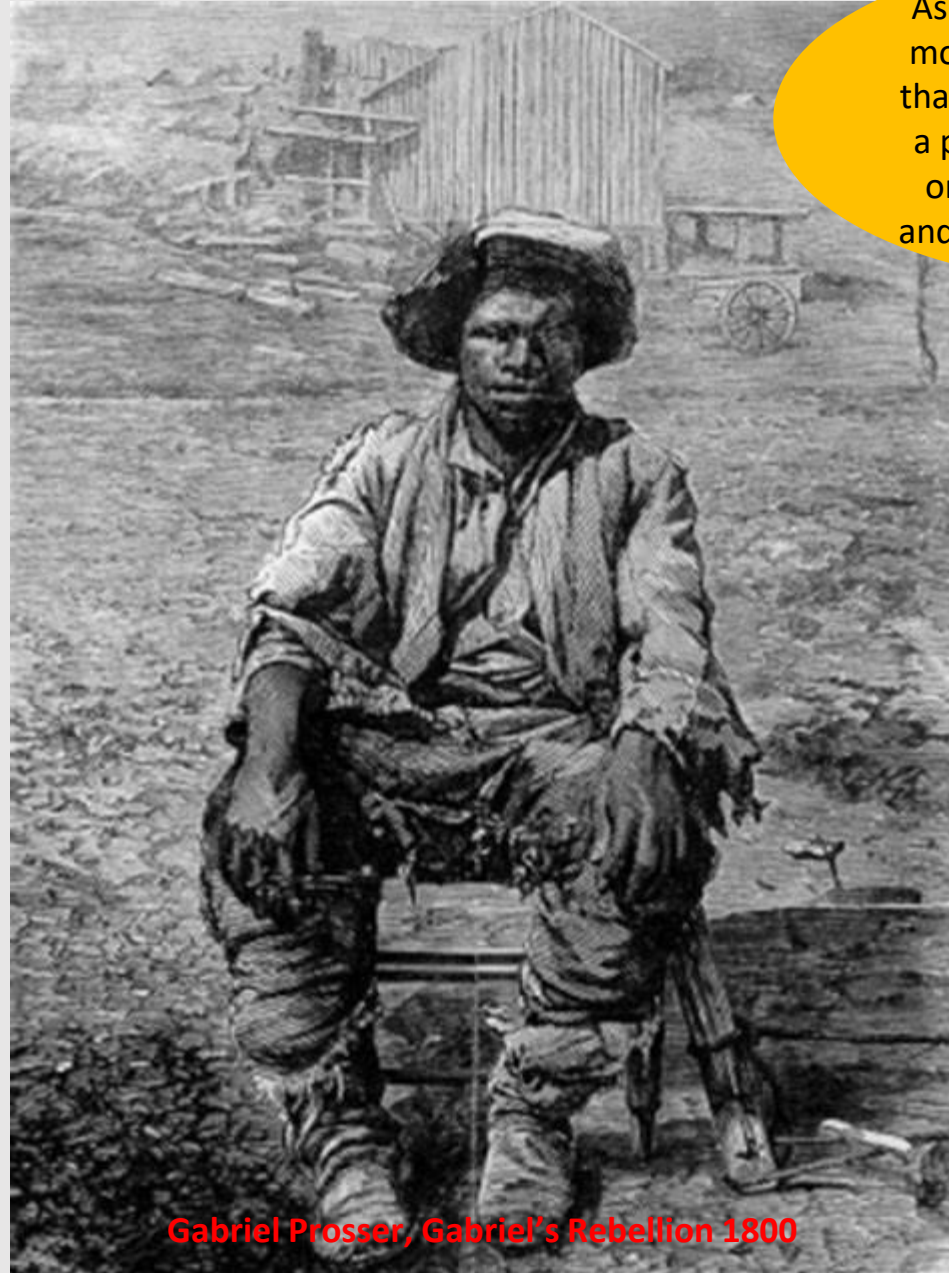
Gabriel and his brother, slave preacher Martin, worked together to organize slaves for their rebellion.



How did Gabriel and Martin organize the rebellion?



As a blacksmith, Gabriel had more freedom of movement than other slaves. Martin was a preacher, so that he could organize slaves at funerals and secret religious meetings.



Gabriel Prosser, Gabriel's Rebellion 1800





What was their plan?

Were Gabriel and Martin successful?

They planned to attack Richmond, Virginia, to destroy slavery. They planned to attack whites except for Quakers, Methodists, and the French who supported the slaves.

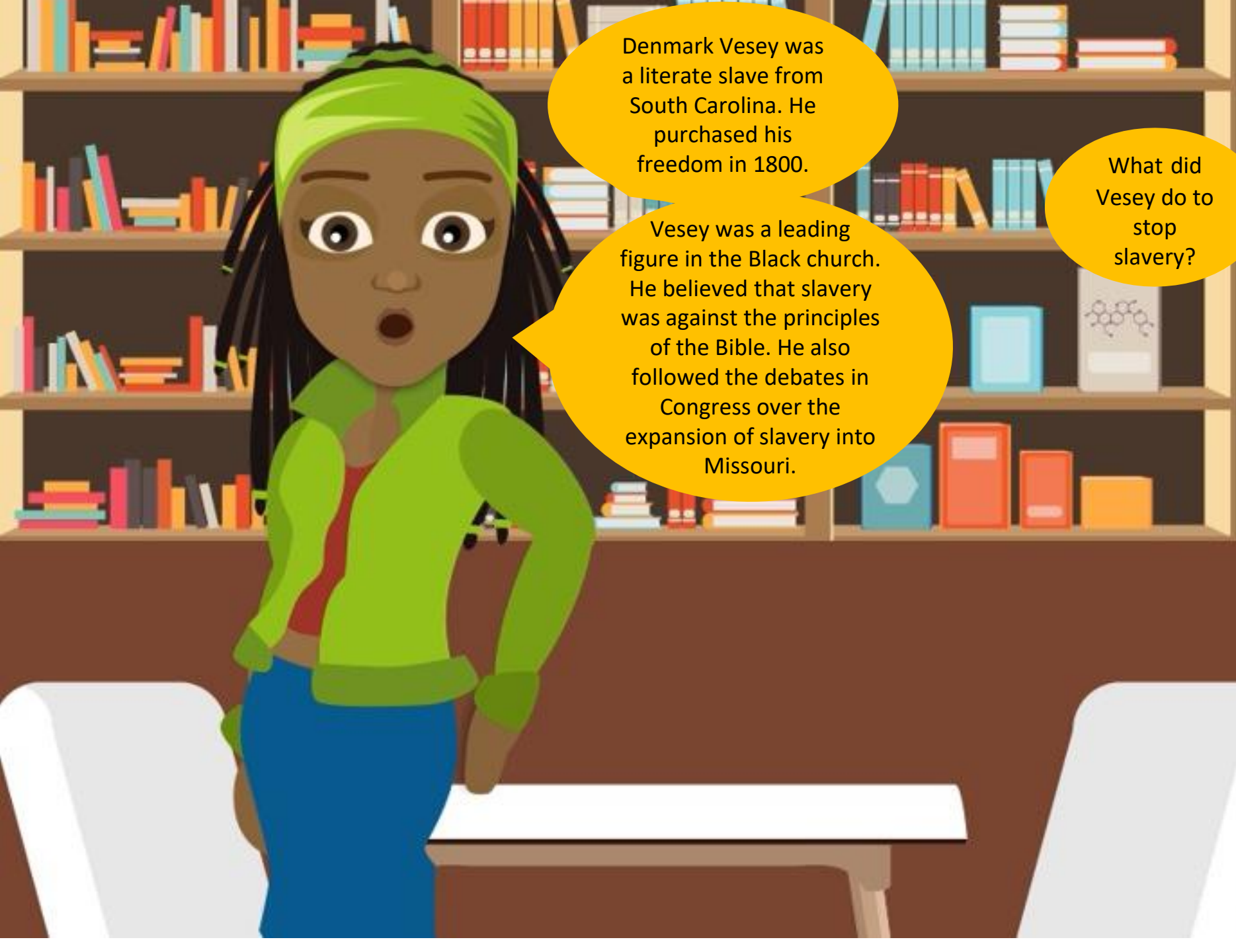
On August 30, 1800, a thunderstorm washed out the roads to Richmond. On the same day, two slaves alerted authorities about Gabriel's plan, and several Blacks lost their lives. Sadly, that ended Gabriel's Rebellion.



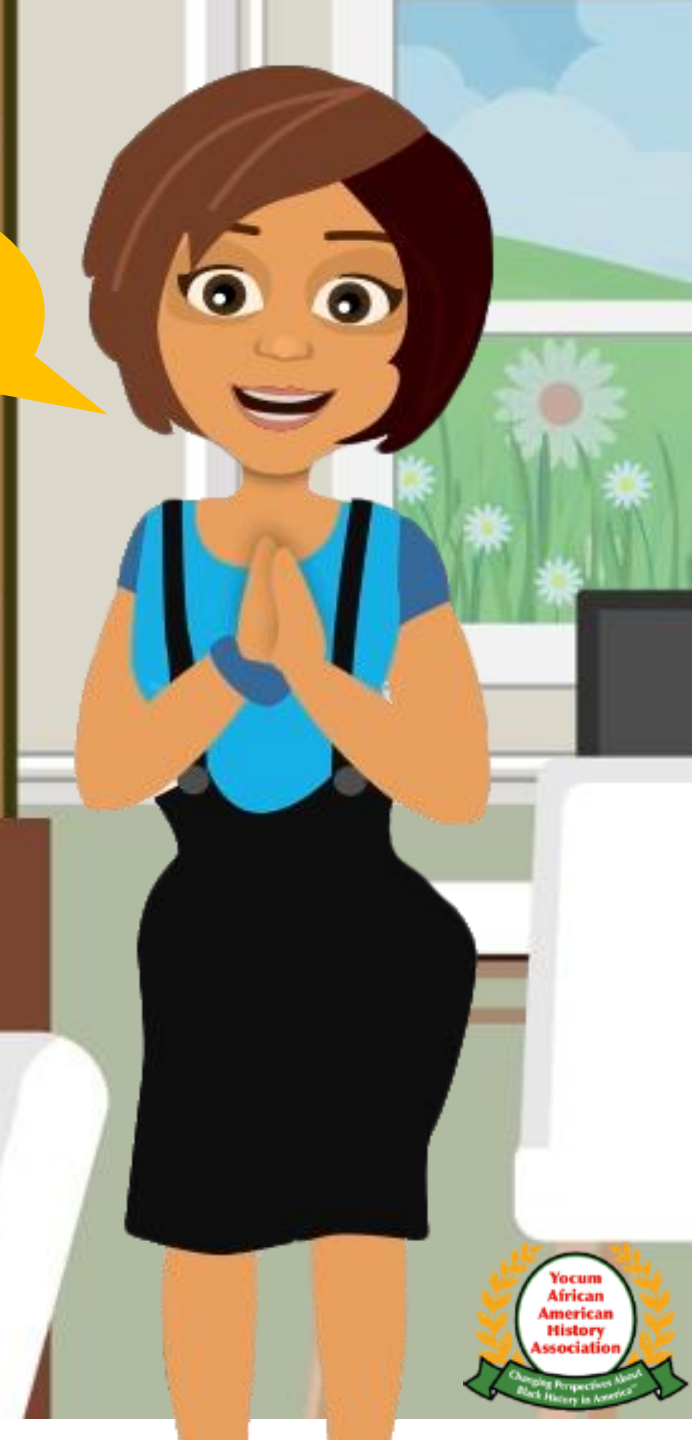


The Denmark Vesey Conspiracy in 1822 was named after Denmark Vesey, a slave carpenter. Let's take a closer look at Vesey.



An illustration of a woman with dark skin, long black braids, a green headband, a green jacket over a red top, and a blue skirt. She has a surprised expression with wide eyes and an open mouth. She is standing in a library with bookshelves in the background. A yellow speech bubble is next to her.


Denmark Vesey was a literate slave from South Carolina. He purchased his freedom in 1800.

An illustration of a woman with light skin and short brown hair, wearing a blue shirt and a black dress with suspenders. She has her hands clasped in front of her and a smiling expression. She is standing in a library with a window in the background showing a green field and flowers. A yellow speech bubble is next to her.

Vesey was a leading figure in the Black church. He believed that slavery was against the principles of the Bible. He also followed the debates in Congress over the expansion of slavery into Missouri.

What did Vesey do to stop slavery?





First, he recruited more than 1,000 free and enslaved Blacks from rural areas to attack Charleston in July 1822. Vesey's plan was to get rid of Whites and free all enslaved Blacks. Unfortunately, George Wilson, a loyal slave told his master, and the plot was foiled.

Roxanne, the good that came out of the failed conspiracy was that it helped rally the Black communities and leaders such as Frederick Douglass against slavery.

It is sad the Denmark Vesey's plan did not work, but I am happy that so many others worked to end slavery.




Roxanne, this is Nat Turner. He led one of the largest slave rebellions in American history in 1831. It took place in Southampton County, Virginia.

Nat's Rebellion played an important role in the changes that occurred in the antebellum slave society.



**The Nat Turner Rebellion, 1831**

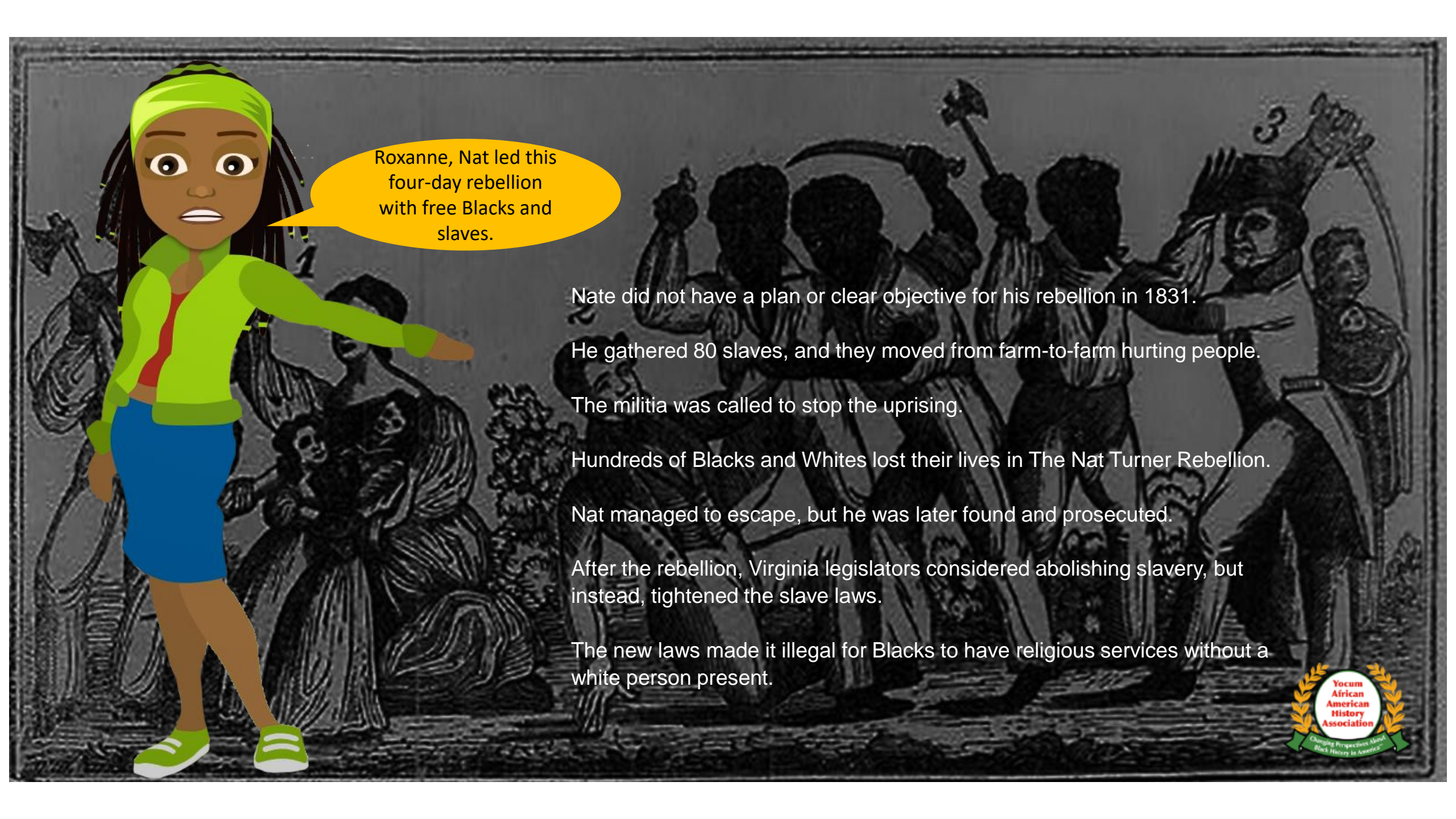




So, what happened to Nat?

Nat was a literate slave preacher and something of a mystic. He started seeing visions in the sky. He believed God chose him to be the Moses of his people.

Let's see what Nat did to launch his rebellion.



Roxanne, Nat led this four-day rebellion with free Blacks and slaves.

Nate did not have a plan or clear objective for his rebellion in 1831.

He gathered 80 slaves, and they moved from farm-to-farm hurting people.

The militia was called to stop the uprising.


Hundreds of Blacks and Whites lost their lives in The Nat Turner Rebellion.

Nat managed to escape, but he was later found and prosecuted.

After the rebellion, Virginia legislators considered abolishing slavery, but instead, tightened the slave laws.

The new laws made it illegal for Blacks to have religious services without a white person present.






Slaves fought for their freedom at every opportunity. Many slave laws were enacted to restrict the liberty of slaves to protect the institution of slavery in the New World.

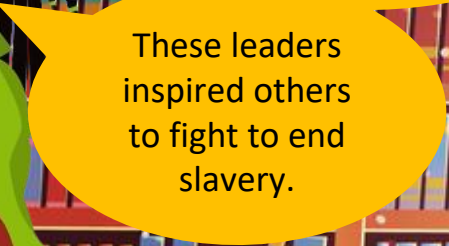
Roxanne, it was against the law to teach a slave to read. However, did you notice that four of the six rebellions in this lesson were started by slaves that could read?

Harriet, that's amazing!





Slaves wanted freedom and were willing to get it at all cost. Literate slaves Jemmy, Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner did their best to free slaves.



These leaders inspired others to fight to end slavery.



Awesome!



We hope you will come back soon for more **Talking History with Harriet & Roxanne!**





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