appropriating the possession of a fellow slave, or a non-slaveholder, was "stealing," helping oneself to sorely-needed meat or milk belonging to the master was but taking that which one's labor produced. 8

 Strikes were by no means unknown under slavery. The method most commonly pursued was for the Negroes to flee to outlying swamps or forests, and to send back word that only if their demands—perhaps for better food or clothes, or fewer beatings, shorter hours, or even a new overseer—were met (or, at least, discussed) would they willingly return. It is interesting to observe that during the Civil War the slaves added a new demand, the payment of money wages, and at times won, thus lifting themselves by their own boot-strap from chattels to wage workers. 9

 Self-mutilation was another method which at times appealed to slaves as a method of shortening their own misery, and hurting their oppressors. 10 Notices of acts of self-destruction also occur. 11 Because of the possibility of imitation, planters tended to keep news of suicides from the other Negroes. On at least one occasion, in 1807 in Charleston, mass suicides occurred; in

8 R. Parkinson, Experiences of a Farmer's Tour, II, p. 432-33; Olmsted, op. cit., I, p. 120; W. Meade, Sermons, p. 215; S. Ferrall, A Ramble of Six Thousand Miles, p. 293. Each of these sources not only refers to the existence of the "taking," but to the presence of a well-thought out justification for it. This practice and philosophy exist today—see A. Davis and B. D. and M. R. Gardner, Deep South, p. 357. See also W. H. Stephenson in The Mississippi Valley Hist. Rev., XXI, p. 355-74.


10 Olmsted, op. cit., I, p. 208; F. Bremer, Homes of the New World, III, p. 339; Richmond Daily Dispatch, July 2, 1856, reported that three men, to prevent being sold, had cut off three fingers from each hand.

11 The Liberator (Boston), June 6, 1835, October 6, 1837, quoting local papers; Documents 1829, House of Delegates, 1859, Virginia, Document # 46, lists several poison cases; [A. Hewett], An Historical Account of South Carolina and Georgia, II, p. 92; C. G. Woodson, The Negro in Our History, p. 92; Virginia Mag. Hist. and Biol., XXIV, p. 412.

INDIVIDUAL ACTS OF RESISTANCE

this case two boatloads of newly-arrived Negroes starved themselves to death. 12

Individual attempts at assassination or property damage by gun, knife, club, axe, poison, or fire were so numerous that undertaking an enumeration of all would be a well-nigh impossible task. Some specific references to the last two devices will be given in order to present an idea of how prevalent they were.

In 1751 South Carolina enacted a law providing the death penalty, without benefit of clergy, for slaves found guilty of attempting to poison white people. The preamble related that the frequency with which this had occurred was the reason for legislative action. The law provided a reward of four pounds to any Negro whose information concerning a slave's attempt to poison his master led to conviction. 13 A decade later the Charleston Gazette 14 complained that "The negroes have again begun the hellish practice of poisoning." In 1779, Georgia passed an act similar to South Carolina's, providing death for poison attempts, the preamble explaining its origin in the words, 15 "whereas, the detestable crime of poisoning hath frequently been committed by slaves." A slave informed in such a case was to receive twenty shillings each year until death and, upon the day he received this money, was to be excused from labor. Typical examples of this type of activity on the part of the slaves are the convictions in Maryland in 1755 of five slaves for conspiring

12 C. W. Elliott, Winfield Scott, p. 18; A Southern physician, Dr. E. N. Pendleton, "stated that abortion and miscarriages were four times as frequent among the Negroes as among the whites; that all country practitioners are aware of the frequent complaints of planters from this subject;" that while the planters believed the Negroes used drugs he was not certain of this personally."—Southern Medical Reports, New Orleans, 1849, in J. J. Spengler, "Population theory in the ante-bellum South," in Journal of Southern History, II, p. 370 n.

13 T. Cooper, Statutes at Large of S. C., VII, p. 422; II. Henry, op. cit., p. 17.


INDIVIDUAL ACTS OF RESISTANCE

After two years of war, the situation in the South was quite different from what it had been in the North. The South was now facing a new enemy — the Union army, which was well-equipped and well-organized. The Southern people were determined to resist the Northern army and to preserve their way of life.

As the war continued, the Southern people found new ways to fight back. They used guerrilla tactics, sabotage, and diplomacy to hinder the Northern cause. They also used the Underground Railroad to help slaves escape to freedom in the North.

Despite the hardships, the Southern people remained strong and determined. They believed that they could win the war and preserve their way of life.

In the end, the war was won by the North, but the Southern people continued to fight, and their spirit of resistance lives on to this day.