Kyler Eckess

Reading log #6

History 1120-01

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1. The document “Acts of Resistance” by Afua Cooper is meant to illustrate how Black slaves were mistreated during slavery and how they had no human rights at all, not even the right to live. The owners of these slaves had complete control over these African slaves, but that didn’t stop the slaves from resisting. The continual effort of resistance by the slaves ultimately led to the ban of slavery in Canada. This document by Cooper demonstrates the context of Canada and how these slaves were treated prior to the ban of slavery in Canada.
2. This document by Cooper has a deep understanding to the brutalities that had been taking place in Canada at the time. Cooper goes in depth of the type of conditions that Black slaves had to endure by saying, “The fact that Vrooman bound Cooley with a rope showed how much Black women were though of as brute, unfeminine, and unworthy of masculine protection.”[[1]](#footnote-1) The brutality of the treatment was also expressed in the document which offers a great understanding of how slave owners treated Black people as if they were cattle. This is expressed by Cooper by saying in the document, “She had one thing at her disposal that she could use to express her anger, outrage, and fear—her voice. And so she screamed—a heart-rending scream that echoed beyond the boundaries of Vrooman’s farm”[[2]](#footnote-2)
3. This document does a great job of illustrating the harsh and violent environment Black slaves had to endure with great fortitude. Some questions that may arise for the reader may be how many Black slaves resisted against the slave owners? Were the Blacks at a large disadvantage? Or in some cases were they able to rebel against their owners? Before the underground railway had begun, how many Black slaves were punished due to the effort of trying to escape? Many other questions may arise for the reader, but all questions will be answered with the same theme of the violent acts that had occurred on the Black slave population in Canada.
4. Chloe Cooley was a Black slave under the control of William Vrooman. She had been tied up and violently and forcibly transported across the Niagara River to be delivered to an unknown personnel. Peter Martin, a black man and former slave, came to the Government House to dispute the case of Cooley, and to argue that she was unfairly treated. The courts did not fine Vrooman because he had not broken any laws, because it was not illegal at the time to mistreat slaves because they had no human rights. Although Vrooman was not penalized, this had been a stepping stone towards the freedom of Black slaves in Canada. Sir Henry Lewis was also a Black slave under the ownership of William Jarvis. Lewis had written a letter to his owner informing him that he was leaving and had offered to buy his own freedom on these conditions, “Ten pounds this years and every year after six-teen pounds until the whole sum is payed”[[3]](#footnote-3) Lewis fled to New York in hopes of benefiting himself off of his work instead of benefiting an owner. This was an act of resistance by Lewis, and rebelled against his conditions in Upper Canada by running away.
5. The website does a great job showing who did what to contribute to the ban of slavery in Canada. The formatting is great because it gives every person who did something significant a category and also expresses what they have done, which gives clarity to how slavery was ultimately banned in Canada, and also illustrates who had been in the way of the ban of slavery. In a sense, it shows all the significant people and occurrences that had led to the ban of slavery.
1. Afua Cooper, “Acts of Resistance: Black Men and Women Engage Slavery in Upper Canada, 1793-1803”, Ontario History, vol.99, (2007) pp. 5-17 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Afua Cooper, “Acts of Resistance: Black Men and Women Engage Slavery in Upper Canada, 1793-1803”, Ontario History, vol.99, (2007) pp. 5-17 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Afua Cooper, “Acts of Resistance: Black Men and Women Engage Slavery in Upper Canada, 1793-1803”, Ontario History, vol.99, (2007) pp. 5-17 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)