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The Fires of Jubilee

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The Fires of Jubilee

The Fires of Jubilee was authored by Stephen Oates. He brings out how slavery and racial discrimination was eminent in the United States of America by painting a picture of the same through revolution against slavery by African Americans in the Southampton town in Virginia. The book clearly illustrates how the white masters viewed slavery as normality despite their slaves being discontented with the treatment they received while working as slaves. The rise of Nat Turner, who was perceived to be extraordinary, disciplined and spiritual in character, made it possible for the white masters to trust him. In the process, he organized a successful rebellion with an army of eight, which made him send a strong message to the white masters about the mistreatments they experienced as slaves (Oates, 1975). The spirituality in him made other slaves easily accept him as a leader and view him as extraordinary (Oates, 1975). This paper, therefore, focuses on how slavery impacted Southampton county and its residents and Turner's rebellion and its outcome towards the realization of slavery abolishment.

The author brings out how slavery made it possible for the white masters to have immense wealth while their slaves languish in suffering and poverty. The slaves were only required to do hard labor to enhance their masters make more wealth in return. In the pursuit of wealth, the white masters never cared about the welfare of their slaves and went to an extent of using military guards to ensure that the black American slaves were always kept at work (Oates, 1975). The use of military guards was also important for the white masters because, through force, the slaves were kept an eye on and could not gather and gang up against their masters through rebellion (Oates, 1975). Oates narrates through his book that there was extra force on the slave that was inhuman and against their rights, for the white masters only saw them as labor force but not humans. Anyone who dared to rebel met the wrath of the white supremacists, for

they could easily get killed as a result. Slavery, therefore, instilled fear in slaves, for they had to endure hard labor to remain alive. Also, slavery, apart from creating social stratification in the society where whites became richer while slaves poorer, Oates (1975), through his book, narrates how it created intense hatred between the whites and slaves. The slaves viewed the poor state of their situation to have been necessitated by their white counterparts and at the same time, the white masters viewed the slaves like animals who did not deserve freedom of whatever nature.

As a way of ending slavery, the book narrates how Nat Turner organized a rebellion that brought about abolishing slavery in Southampton county of Virginia state. According to Oates (1975), Turner had a strong personality that made him get favors from his white masters, unlike other slaves who subjected to hard labor and no freedom. In the process, He was allowed to read the bible and also gather for worshipping without being monitored by the masters than other slaves more trusted him. The education he acquired from reading the bible made him cognizant that slavery was immoral, wrong, and unjust (Oates, 1975). Also, being that he was more civilized than the rest of the slaves, the formal education paved the way for him to be easily accepted as a rebellion leader. As a result, he organized eight men who led the rebellion by killing their white masters to warn about how they felt like slaves. Even though other men were caught and hanged, he managed to escape after leading the rebellion. However, according to Oates (1975), this rebellion made masters more strict but, on the same note, became aware of the plights of the slaves in their farms. Consequently, the white masters began to give them more freedom, like more time with their families. Therefore, the charismatic character of Turner made him capable of sending a strong message through a rebellion about their discontentment as slaves and paved the way for slavery abolishment.

Conclusively, the book talks about how slaves were mistreated, discriminated against, and killed while the masters paid no attention to it as they saw it as normal. The rise of Turner as a strong charismatic leader of the slaves made their plights known to their masters through a rebellion. Turner's smartness was seen when he used a small group of eight that was easy to manage without the information about the rebellion being leaked compared to a large group, which was dangerous to use. The killing of the white masters using silent weapons made it possible for the slavery abolishment process to kick off.

Reference

Oates, S. B. (1975). *The fires of jubilee: Nat Turner's fierce rebellion/Nat Turner's fierce rebellion* (No. 975.555 Oa8f Ej. 1 025124). Harper & Row,.

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