

Barbados (1816) - The Rebellion

Very little is known about Bussa (also known as Busso or Bussoe). He was born a free man in Africa in the 18th century, captured and brought to Barbados as a slave.

He had a job as a Head Ranger at Bayley's Plantation. He was also brave, strong and determined to enforce change.

On Sunday, 14th April, 1816, he led a rebellion against the British sugar cane Planters involving over 400 enslaved

people. The uprising had been carefully planned for some time, following the rejection of a parliament law about how to count the numbers of slaves - the slaves thought that their freedom had been passed but the local slave owners were keeping it from them. So they

Nanny Grigg was one of the senior enslaved people who also helped to plan the uprising. Nanny Grigg told her followers that the only way to obtain freedom was to fight for it, the slave

owners would never give it to them without a fight.

The rebellion was the first in 124 years and resulted in a battle between the enslaved people, the planters and the First West India Regiment. Bussa was killed in battle and the revolt was quelled, due to the superior weapons of the army.

By the time soldiers had crushed the revolt, a quarter of the island's sugar cane crop had gone up in smoke. Nearly 125 rebels were killed. After the rebellion, 214 more were executed and 123 were transported from the island to be sold elsewhere as slaves. Bussa was killed in battle at Bayley's plantation.

In contrast, during the rebellion only 2 men were killed - the slaves showed great control not to slaughter their white owners.

Bussa became a symbol of the right to live in freedom.



