

GO TO LIST OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN HARPERS FERRY

VARIOUS PERSONAGES INVOLVED

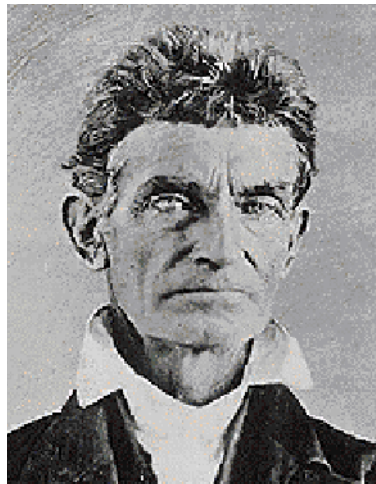


IN THE



FOMENTING OF RACE WAR (RATHER THAN CIVIL WAR)

IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



John Brown

It is clear that Henry Thoreau was not trusted with any of the secrets of the conspiracy we have come to know as the Secret "Six," to the extent that his future editor and biographer Franklin Benjamin Sanborn confided to him nothing whatever about the ongoing meetings which he was having with the Reverend Thomas Wentworth "Charles P. Carter" Higginson, the Reverend Theodore Parker, Gerrit Smith, Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, and George Luther Stearns. For Thoreau commented in his JOURNAL in regard to Captain John Brown, "it would seem that he had not confidence enough in me, **or in anybody else that I know** [my emphasis], to communicate his plans to us." -And, Thoreau could not have believed this and could not have made such an entry in his journal had any member of the Secret Six been providing him with any clues whatever that there was something going on behind the scenes, within their own private realm of scheming! Had it been the case, that Thoreau had become aware that there was in existence another,



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parallel, universe of scheming, rather than writing "or in anybody else that I know," he would most assuredly have written something more on the order of (perhaps) "it would seem that they had not confidence enough in me, to provide me any insight into their plans."

Treason being punished as what it is, why would the downtown Boston lawyer [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) allow himself to become legal counsel to a "Secret Six" committee that was funding the activities of [Captain John Brown](#), as that loose cannon prepared to raid the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry, Virginia](#)? He was going to be implicated as having obviously had guilty prior knowledge, and was obviously making himself of necessity a prime candidate for the noose. As the going got hot he would make himself unavailable for prosecution –by venturing on a luxury trip around the globe– but the issue is not how he might extricate himself from this, but why he would have so endangered himself.

The Reverend [Thomas Wentworth "Charles P. Carter" Higginson](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#) believed that "Never in history was there an oppressed people who were set free by others" (it was therefore up to American black people to demonstrate their courage, and their worthiness to be free — basically by getting themselves exterminated). After [Harpers Ferry](#) he would attempt to organize an expedition to raid the Charles Town lockup and rescue the accused — this was an expedition [Henry Thoreau](#) would oppose, asserting that to the contrary [Captain Brown](#)'s highest and best purpose was to be hung.

[Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#) and others of the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee raised \$5,000 in one day, to buy enough Sharp's rifles to arm 200 men to the teeth in "[Bleeding Kansas](#)." He, as well as the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), [Gerrit Smith](#), and [George Luther Stearns](#), fully grasped from the earliest moment the fact that the probable result of their attempt to incite a race war (black Americans against white), would be, at least initially, a defeat of the black forces of [servile insurrection](#). These 5 of the white conspirators of the [Secret "Six"](#) finance committee clearly had been willing to sacrifice the lives of their black allies in order to foment sectional [civil war](#) between Northern and Southern white Americans.

The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), a stone racist, declared from his pulpit that while he ordinarily spent \$1,500 a year on books, the equivalent of 4 or 5 men's annual wages, for the time being he was going to restrict himself to spending less than one man's annual wage on books per year, and devote the remaining moneys to the purchase of guns and ammunition for the white people going to the Kansas Territory. Sharps rifles, the very latest in deadliness, cost \$25 apiece when had in sufficient quantity:

"I make all my pecuniary arrangements with the expectation of [civil war](#)."

He would take to marking the boxes of new Sharps rifles he shipped illegally to "[Bleeding Kansas](#)" with the word **BOOKS**, and he would take to referring to these firearms as so many copies of RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE as in "The right of the people to keep and to bear arms shall not be infringed." He, as well as [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#), [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), [Gerrit Smith](#), and [George Luther Stearns](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#), fully grasped from the earliest moment the fact that the probable result of their attempt to incite a race war, of black Americans against white Americans, would be, at least initially, a defeat of the black forces of [servile insurrection](#). These 5 of the white conspirators clearly had been willing to sacrifice the lives of their allies among the Northern and Southern black Americans slave and free, in order to foment a rectification of the Southern white Americans.



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[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) of [Concord](#), as well as [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#), the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), [Gerrit Smith](#), and [George Luther Stearns](#), fully grasped from the earliest moment the fact that the probable result of their attempt to incite a race war, of black Americans against white Americans, would be, at least initially, a defeat of their black forces. These 5 of the white [Secret "Six"](#) conspirators clearly had been willing to sacrifice the lives of their black allies for [servile insurrection](#) in order to foment sectional [civil war](#) between Northern and Southern white Americans. ([John Brown](#), who had himself buried a wife and promptly recruited another one, once commented to [Sanborn](#), in regard to the young man's grief over the prompt death of his young bride Ariana Walker, that he was too young to be married to a gravestone.)

The immensely wealthy "H. Ross Perot" political figure of that era was a former [Millerite](#) millennialist: [Gerrit Smith](#). In this American's mansion outside Syracuse, New York, standing in the center of his study, was an ornate mahogany desk. Rumor had it that this had once been the desk of the emperor [Napoleon Bonaparte](#) himself. The millennium of William Miller not having arrived on schedule, Smith had become determined to, as he put it, "make himself a colored man" –he desired to explore his inner blackness– and thus he befriended [Frederick Douglass](#) (Smith would be Douglass's friend, that is, up to the point at which he would discover that black Americans were inherently racially inferior to white Americans and thus unworthy of consideration). He, as well as [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#), the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), and [George Luther Stearns](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#) fully grasped from the earliest moment that the probable result of their attempt to incite a [servile insurrection](#) of black Americans against white Americans, would be, at least initially, a defeat of the black forces. These 5 of the white conspirators clearly had been willing to sacrifice the lives of their black allies, in order to disrupt relations between Northern and Southern white Americans, toward the generation of a sectional [civil war](#).

[George Luther Stearns](#), a Boston manufacturer of lead pipe and the secretary of the Boston Emancipation League, as well as [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#), the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), and [Gerrit Smith](#) of the [Secret "Six."](#) fully grasped from the earliest moment the fact that the probable result of their attempt to incite a race war, of black Americans against white Americans, would be, at least initially, a defeat of their black forces. These 5 of the white conspirators clearly had been willing to sacrifice the lives of their black allies in [servile insurrection](#) in order to foment a sectional [civil war](#) between Northern and Southern white Americans.

HDT

WHAT?

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John Brown's Hair

I Louis Mashro, Lifetime member of the Manuscript Society, have removed this hair from the enclosed damaged lot.
Louis Mashro
Louis Mashro

CERTIFICATION

I certify that the strands of hair herewith accompanying were removed by me from the old envelope (pictured here) inscribed "John Brown's Hair," apparently in Brown's own handwriting. The lock of hair was probably sent by Brown to an admirer. This envelope, with the hair inside, was recently discovered in a collection of important John Brown letters, formerly the property of Sol Feinstein, noted manuscript collector.

The Manuscript Society
LIFE MEMBER
LIFE *Louis Mashro*

Charles Hamilton
Charles Hamilton



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Table of Altitudes

☰	Yoda	2' 0"
	Lavinia Warren	2' 8"
	Tom Thumb, Jr.	3' 4"
	Lucy (Australopithecus Afarensis)	3' 8"
	Hervé Villechaize ("Fantasy Island")	3' 11"
	Charles Proteus Steinmetz	4' 0"
	Mary Moody Emerson per FBS (1)	4' 3"
	Alexander Pope	4' 6"
	Benjamin Lay	4' 7"
	Dr. Ruth Westheimer	4' 7"
☰	Gary Coleman ("Arnold Jackson")	4' 8"
	Edith Piaf	4' 8"
	Queen Victoria with osteoporosis	4' 8"
	Linda Hunt	4' 9"
	Queen Victoria as adult	4' 10"
	Mother Teresa	4' 10"
	Margaret Mitchell	4' 10"
	length of newer military musket	4' 10"
	Charlotte Brontë	4' 10-11"
	Tammy Faye Bakker	4' 11"
	Soviet gymnast Olga Korbut	4' 11"
	jockey Willie Shoemaker	4' 11"
	Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec	4' 11"
	Joan of Arc	4' 11"
	Bonnie Parker of "Bonnie & Clyde"	4' 11"
	Harriet Beecher Stowe	4' 11"
	Laura Ingalls Wilder	4' 11"
☰	a rather tall adult Pygmy male	4' 11"
	Gloria Swanson	4' 11"1/2
	Clara Barton	5' 0"
	Isambard Kingdom Brunel	5' 0"
	Andrew Carnegie	5' 0"
	Thomas de Quincey	5' 0"
	Stephen A. Douglas	5' 0"
	Danny DeVito	5' 0"



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Immanuel Kant	5' 0 "
William Wilberforce	5' 0 "
Dollie Parton	5' 0 "
Mae West	5' 0 "
Pia Zadora	5' 0 "
Deng Xiaoping	5' 0 "
Dred Scott	5' 0 " (±)
Captain William Bligh of HMS <i>Bounty</i>	5' 0 " (±)
Harriet Tubman	5' 0 " (±)
Mary Moody Emerson per FBS (2)	5' 0 " (±)
John Brown of Providence, Rhode Island	5' 0 " (+)
John Keats	5' 3/4 "
Debbie Reynolds (Carrie Fisher's mother)	5' 1 "
Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher)	5' 1 "
Bette Midler	5' 1 "
Dudley Moore	5' 2 "
Paul Simon (of Simon & Garfunkel)	5' 2 "
Honoré de Balzac	5' 2 "
Sally Field	5' 2 "
Jemmy Button	5' 2 "
Margaret Mead	5' 2 "
R. Buckminster "Bucky" Fuller	5' 2 "
Yuri Gagarin the astronaut	5' 2 "
William Walker	5' 2 "
Horatio Alger, Jr.	5' 2 "
length of older military musket	5' 2 "
the artist formerly known as Prince	5' 2 1/2 "
typical female of Thoreau's period	5' 2 1/2 "
Francis of Assisi	5' 3 "
Voltaire	5' 3 "
Mohandas Gandhi	5' 3 "
Kahlil Gibran	5' 3 "
Friend Daniel Ricketson	5' 3 "
The Reverend Gilbert White	5' 3 "
Nikita Khrushchev	5' 3 "
Sammy Davis, Jr.	5' 3 "
Truman Capote	5' 3 "
Kim Jong Il (North Korea)	5' 3 "





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Stephen A. "Little Giant" Douglas	5' 4 "
Francisco Franco	5' 4 "
President James Madison	5' 4 "
Iosef Vissarionovich Dzugashvili "Stalin"	5' 4 "
Alan Ladd	5' 4 "
Pablo Picasso	5' 4 "
Truman Capote	5' 4 "
Queen Elizabeth	5' 4 "
Ludwig van Beethoven	5' 4 "
Typical Homo Erectus	5' 4 "
typical Neanderthal adult male	5' 4 ¹ / ₂ "
Alan Ladd	5' 4 ¹ / ₂ "
comte de Buffon	5' 5 " (-)
Captain Nathaniel Gordon	5' 5 "
Charles Manson	5' 5 "
Audie Murphy	5' 5 "
Harry Houdini	5' 5 "
Hung Hsiu-ch'üan 洪秀全	5' 5 "
Marilyn Monroe	5' 5 ¹ / ₂ "
T.E. Lawrence "of Arabia"	5' 5 ¹ / ₂ "
average runaway male American slave	5' 5-6 "
Charles Dickens	5' 6? "
President Benjamin Harrison	5' 6 "
President Martin Van Buren	5' 6 "
James Smithson	5' 6 "
Louisa May Alcott	5' 6 "
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe	5' 6 ¹ / ₂ "
Napoleon Bonaparte	5' 6 ¹ / ₂ "
Emily Brontë	5' 6-7 "
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	5' ? "
average height, seaman of 1812	5' 6.85 "
Oliver Reed Smoot, Jr.	5' 7 "
minimum height, British soldier	5' 7 "
President John Adams	5' 7 "
President John Quincy Adams	5' 7 "
President William McKinley	5' 7 "
"Charley" Parkhurst (a female)	5' 7 "





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Ulysses S. Grant	5' 7"
Henry Thoreau	5' 7"
the average male of Thoreau's period	5' 7 ¹ / ₂ "
Edgar Allan Poe	5' 8"
President Ulysses S. Grant	5' 8"
President William H. Harrison	5' 8"
President James Polk	5' 8"
President Zachary Taylor	5' 8"
average height, soldier of 1812	5' 8.35"
President Rutherford B. Hayes	5' 8 ¹ / ₂ "
President Millard Fillmore	5' 9"
President Harry S Truman	5' 9"
President Jimmy Carter	5' 9 ¹ / ₂ "
Herman Melville	5' 9 ³ / ₄ "
Calvin Coolidge	5' 10"
Andrew Johnson	5' 10"
Theodore Roosevelt	5' 10"
Thomas Paine	5' 10"
Franklin Pierce	5' 10"
Abby May Alcott	5' 10"
Reverend Henry C. Wright	5' 10"
Nathaniel Hawthorne	5' 10 ¹ / ₂ "
Louis "Deerfoot" Bennett	5' 10 ¹ / ₂ "
Friend John Greenleaf Whittier	5' 10 ¹ / ₂ "
President Dwight David "Ike" Eisenhower	5' 10 ¹ / ₂ "
Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots	5' 11"
Sojourner Truth	5' 11"
President Stephen Grover Cleveland	5' 11"
President Herbert Hoover	5' 11"
President Woodrow Wilson	5' 11"
President Jefferson Davis	5' 11"
President Richard Milhous Nixon	5' 11 ¹ / ₂ "
Robert Voorhis the hermit of Rhode Island	< 6'
Frederick Douglass	6' (-)
Anthony Burns	6' 0"
Waldo Emerson	6' 0"
Joseph Smith, Jr.	6' 0"



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David Walker	6'0"
Sarah F. Wakefield	6'0"
Thomas Wentworth Higginson	6'0"
President James Buchanan	6'0"
President Gerald R. Ford	6'0"
President James Garfield	6'0"
President Warren Harding	6'0"
President John F. Kennedy	6'0"
President James Monroe	6'0"
President William H. Taft	6'0"
President John Tyler	6'0"
Captain John Brown	6'0(+)"
President Andrew Jackson	6'1"
Alfred Russel Wallace	6'1"
President Ronald Reagan	6'1"
Venture Smith	6'1 ¹ / ₂ "
John Camel Heenan	6'2"
Crispus Attucks	6'2"
President Chester A. Arthur	6'2"
President George Bush, Senior	6'2"
President Franklin D. Roosevelt	6'2"
President George Washington	6'2"
Gabriel Prosser	6'2"
Dangerfield Newby	6'2"



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Charles Augustus Lindbergh	6' 2"
President Bill Clinton	6' 2 ¹ / ₂ "
President Thomas Jefferson	6' 2 ¹ / ₂ "
President Lyndon B. Johnson	6' 3"
Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.	6' 3"
Richard "King Dick" Seaver	6' 3 ¹ / ₄ "
President Abraham Lincoln	6' 4"
Marion Morrison (AKA John Wayne)	6' 4"
Elisha Reynolds Potter, Senior	6' 4"
Thomas Cholmondeley	6' 4" (?)
William Buckley	6' 4-7"
Franklin Benjamin Sanborn	6' 5"
Peter the Great of Russia	6' 7"
William "Dwarf Billy" Burley	6' 7"
Giovanni Battista Belzoni	6' 7"
Thomas Jefferson (the statue)	7' 6"
Jefferson Davis (the statue)	7' 7"
Martin Van Buren Bates	7' 11 ¹ / ₂ "
M. Bihin, a Belgian exhibited in Boston in 1840	8'
Anna Haining Swan	8' 1"





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THOSE INVOLVED, ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY



SECRET "SIX"

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
Charles Francis Adams, Sr.	No	No	No	Finance		white
<p>Charles Francis Adams, Sr. subscribed to the racist agenda of Eli Thayer's and Amos Lawrence's New England Emigrant Aid Company, for the creation of an Aryan Nation in the territory then well known as "Bleeding Kansas." to the tune of \$25,000.</p>						
Jeremiah Goldsmith Anderson	Yes	Yes		Captain or Lt.	26	white



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Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>The maternal grandfather of Jeremiah Goldsmith Anderson, Colonel Jacob Westfall of Tygert Valley, Virginia, had been a soldier in the revolution and a slaveholder. Jeremiah had gone to school at Galesburg, Illinois and Kossuth, Iowa and had worked as a peddler, farmer, and sawmill laborer before settling a mile from Fort Bain on the Little Osage in Bourbon County in "Bleeding Kansas" during August 1857. He had twice been arrested by proslavery activists, and had been held for 10 weeks at Fort Scott. He then became a lieutenant of Captain Montgomery and was with him in the attack on Captain Anderson's troop of the 1st US Cavalry. He witnessed a murder, of a Mr. Denton, on his own doorstep by border ruffians. He went with John Brown on the slave raid into Missouri and remained with him thereafter. He was "J. Anderson" among the signatories to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," from a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18th, 1859. On July 5th, 1859 this 27-year-old had written of his determination to continue to fight for freedom: "Millions of fellow-beings require it of us; their cries for help go out to the universe daily and hourly. Whose duty is it to help them? Is it yours? Is it mine? It is every man's, but how few there are to help. But there are a few who dare to answer this call and dare to answer it in a manner that will make this land of liberty and equality shake to the centre." He was thrust through with a bayonet by one of the Marines, and pinned against the wall "vomiting gore." A white man, he was tortured because he was perceived by the attackers as a light mulatto: "One of the prisoners described Anderson as turning completely over against the wall [to which he was pinned by the bayonet] in his dying agony. He lived a short time, stretched on the brick walk without, where he was subjected to savage brutalities, being kicked in body and face, while one brute of an armed farmer spat a huge quid of tobacco from his vile jaws into the mouth of the dying man, which he first forced open." A local commented "Well, it takes you a hell of a long time to die." When opportunistic medical students would go to transport the remains to their college in Winchester, Virginia for dissection, their treatment of this corpse was so casual as to be recorded by a bystander: "In order to take him away handily they procured a barrel and tried to pack him into it. Head foremost, they rammed him in, but they could not bend his legs so as to get them into the barrel with the rest of the body. In their endeavor to accomplish this feat, they strained so hard that the man's bones or sinews fairly cracked." His remains were taken to the college along with the remains of Watson Brown (a corpse found on the banks of the Shenandoah River was more likely that of a local slave).</p>						
John Anderson	?	?		Private	< 30	of color
<p>John Anderson, a free black youth from Boston allegedly killed at Harpers Ferry. Nothing is known as to who he was, other than that he was young, or where he came from, other than from Boston — and it is even possible that actually there had been no such person as this in John Brown's company. (The John Anderson we do know about had an entirely different life trajectory, in Canada.)</p>						
Osborn Perry Anderson	Yes	No	No	Private	29	of color





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Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Osborn Perry Anderson, "O.P. Anderson, or as we used to call him Chatham Anderson," the only participant of color to survive Harpers Ferry and elude capture, had been born free on July 27, 1830 in West Fallowfield, Pennsylvania. He had learned the printing trade in Canada, where he had met John Brown in 1858. He was a member of Congress of John Brown's Provisional Government in Chatham, Ontario in May 1858 and was "Osborn Anderson" on the list of signatories of the "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States"; a member of the Vigilance Committee in Chatham and Windsor in September 1858. He would write later of the fight at Harpers Ferry and his escape in A VOICE FROM HARPER'S FERRY: "We were together eight days before [John Edwin Cook and Albert Hazlett were] captured, which was near Chambersburg, and the next night Meriam [Francis Jackson Meriam] left us and went to Shippensburg, and there took cars for Philadelphia. After that there were but three of us left [Brown's son Owen Brown, Barclay Coppoc, and Charles Plummer Tidd], and we kept together, until we got to Centre County, Pennsylvania, where we bought a box and packed up all heavy luggage, such as rifles, blankets, etc., and after being together three or four weeks we separated..." Anderson, Coppoc, and Meriam had journeyed separately to safe exile in the area of St. Catharines, Canada. Anderson enlisted in the US Army in 1864, becoming a recruiter and/or noncommissioned officer for a unit as yet undetermined, and mustered out in Washington DC at the close of the war (he would be identified by his father Vincent Anderson in 1872 as having been a recruiter for the "western regiments"). He was a member of the Equal Rights League in 1865, and represented Michigan at the National Convention of Colored Men in 1869. He died a pauper of TB and lack of care in Washington on December 13th, 1872.</p>						
John Albion Andrew	No					white
<p>Despite the fact that John Albion Andrew was a prominent Massachusetts politician, Franklin Benjamin Sanborn of the Secret "Six" would indicate long after the raid on Harpers Ferry, John Brown's "general purpose of attacking slavery by force, in Missouri or elsewhere, was known in 1857-8-9" to Governor Andrew.</p>						
Henry Ward Beecher	No	No	No	Propaganda		white
<p>The Reverend Henry Ward Beecher induced the congregation of his Plymouth Church to procure a crate of 25 rifles to ship illegally to "Bleeding Kansas" and to stamp upon that crate the term of art BIBLES. The Reverend's personal attitude toward American blacks was that although those like Frederick Douglass whose blood had become partly mingled with the blood of whites were worthy of consideration as human beings, those who yet remained of pure African stock were still in such a "low animal condition" (his category, his words) of pure blackness that such consideration as human beings would be inappropriate.</p>						
Charles Blair	No	No	No	Armament		white
<p>Charles Blair supplied the pikes.</p>						
Ann Brown	No	No	No	Supporter		white



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Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Ann Brown, a daughter of Captain John Brown, was with the conspirators at the Kennedy farm until shortly before the attack upon Harpers Ferry. In the aftermath she would move to the West Coast.</p>						
Frederick Brown	No	No	No	Supporter		white
<p>Frederick Brown was fanatically religious to the extent that he attempted to sever his sexual organs when he was attracted to a young lady. He would have been 28 at the time of the Harpers Ferry raid, but in 1856 had been killed in the fighting in "Bleeding Kansas."</p>						
Jason Brown	No	No	No	Supporter	38	white
<p>Jason Brown, one of the elder sons of Captain John Brown, was a gentle sort of person who actually was trying to become an inventor. He took part in the battle at Black Jack in "Bleeding Kansas," and in the killings on the Osawatimie Creek, but was not at Harpers Ferry. He and his brother Owen Brown would become grape growers in the mountains above Pasadena, California.</p>						
John Brown	Yes	Multiple wounds	Yes	Commander		white
<p>John Brown, "Captain" John "Nelson Hawkins" "Shubel Morgan" "Isaac Smith" Brown.</p>						
John Brown, Jr.	No	No	No	Supporter	38	white
<p>John Brown, Jr., 38 at the time of the Harpers Ferry raid and Captain John Brown's eldest son, had trained as a phrenologist. After the raid he would go into hiding in Ohio and, when summoned to appear before the investigatory committee of the US Senate, would refuse to appear. During the Civil War he served as Captain of Company K of the 7th Kansas Cavalry. He and his family would then find permanent safe haven on South Bass Island in Lake Erie.</p>						
Martha Brewster Brown	No	No	No	Supporter		white
<p>Martha Brewster Brown, wife of Oliver Brown and daughter-in-law of Captain John Brown, was with the conspirators at the Kennedy farm until shortly before the attack upon Harpers Ferry.</p>						
Oliver Brown	Yes	Yes		Captain	20	white



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Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Oliver Brown, the youngest of John Brown's sons to reach adulthood, had been born in Franklin, Ohio on March 9, 1839. He was a bookish lad, considered by his mother Mary Ann Day Brown to be the most promising. He went to "Bleeding Kansas" in 1855 with his father and returned to North Elba during October 1856, where he got married with Martha E. Brewster in 1858. She was sent back north just before the raid on Harpers Ferry. "I think there is no good reason why any of us should be discouraged," he had written his family, "for if we have done but one good act, life is not a failure.... Keep a stiff lip, a sound pluck, and believe that all will come out right in the end." He had reached the age of 20 when he was shot while serving as a sentinel at the river bridge. His body was dumped into a shallow hole on the bank of the Shenandoah River, with the bodies of other fighters.</p>						
Owen Brown	Yes	No	No	Captain	35	white
<p>Owen Brown, 3d of John Brown's sons and his stalwart aid both in "Bleeding Kansas" and at Harper's Ferry, was born November 4, 1824 at Hudson, Ohio. With a withered arm, he had been attempting to make a career of writing humor articles for newspapers. His name was among the signatories to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," from a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18, 1859. He was 35 at the time of the Harpers Ferry raid. He escaped on foot toward the northwestern part of Pennsylvania. It was due largely to his psychological grit and his endurance that the little group of survivors of which he was the leader managed to make it out. He and Charles Plummer Tidd found work and safety under assumed names on an oil-well crew in Crawford County, Pennsylvania. He was the only one of the 5 escaped raiders not to participate in the civil war. He would never marry. He would grow grapes for some time in Ohio in association with 2 of his brothers, and then migrate west, and would be the final survivor of the raiders when he would die on January 9, 1891 at his mountain home "Brown's Peak" near Pasadena, California. A marble monument marked the mountain grave, until during July 2002 it mysteriously disappeared — since the grave was not a registered historical landmark, and not in a cemetery, there would be no investigation.</p>						
Salmon Brown	No				23	white
<p>Salmon Brown, 23 at the time of the Harpers Ferry raid, was said to have been exactly like his father, Captain John Brown, in every particular. He would once comment to a newspaper reporter that "The tannery business, farming, wool buying and the raising of blooded stock were my father's life occupations, though all of them were subordinated to his one consuming passion — freeing the slaves." Salmon would die in Portland, Oregon in 1919.</p>						
Watson Brown	Yes	Yes		Captain	24	white



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NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Watson Brown, born at Franklin, Ohio on October 7, 1835, got married with young Isabella M. Thompson during September 1856. "Dear Belle," he had written to his child-wife, "I would gladly come home and stay with you always but for the cause which brought me here — a desire to do something for others, and not live wholly for my own happiness.... I sometimes feel as if I could not make this sacrifice, but what would I not want others to do were I in their place?" Their son would live only to his 5th year but would nevertheless survive his father, because he was sent out with a white flag by his father John Brown to parley and was gut-shot by the citizens of Harpers Ferry. He managed to crawl back to the shelter of the engine house and live on, groaning, his head cradled in Edwin Coppoc's lap, for a longish period. When one of his captors asked "What brought you here?" he responded "Duty, sir." The corpse would be sent for the instruction of students at the medical college in Winchester, Virginia. Recovering the skeleton from this college during the Civil War, his mother Mary Ann Day Brown eventually would be able to rebury it in the Adirondacks, before heading off to her retirement in California.</p>						
John E. Cook	Yes	No	Yes	Captain	29	white
<p>John Edwin Cook, a well-connected 5'7" gentleman with blue eyes and long, curly blond hair, born during Summer 1830 to a well-to-do family in Haddam, Connecticut, had been a law clerk in Brooklyn and Manhattan after being expelled from Yale College on account of some student indiscretion, and had in 1855 become a member of the guerrilla force operated out of Lawrence in "Bleeding Kansas" by Charles Lenhart and had made himself an excellent shot. The name "John E. Cook" was among the signatories to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," from a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18th, 1859. He had been dispatched by John Brown to Harpers Ferry more than a year before the raid to work out the details on the ground and had secured employment as a lock tender on the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, as a schoolteacher, and as a bookseller. He had gotten married with a Chambersburg, Pennsylvania woman, Mary V. Kennedy, on April 18th, 1859. After being sent out by Captain Brown to collect weapons, and having escaped by climbing into a tree and watching the events transpire, and after having evaded capture for some months, against the advice of his comrades he became reckless in his search for food and was captured on October 25th, 8 miles from Chambersburg. As an incessant and compulsive communicator he had always been considered by the Brown operatives to be indiscreet. In a confession which would be published as a pamphlet at Charles Town in the middle of November 1859 for the benefit of Samuel C. Young, a man who had been crippled for life in the fighting, Cook would detail for his captors all his movements from the point of his 1st meeting with Brown after the battle of Black Jack in June 1856 until after his capture. At the last moment he would seek to save himself by representing that he had been deceived through false promises. For this revelation Cook would be severely censured at the time, being termed "Judas." Despite his confession, and despite his brother-in-law A.P. Willard being the governor of Indiana, he would in the end, one of the last, be also hanged for treason and murder at Harpers Ferry, on December 16th.</p>						
John Anderson Copeland, Jr.	Yes	No	Yes	Private	< 30	of color



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>John Anderson Copeland, Jr. was an Oberlin, Ohio carpenter and freeborn black American who was the son of a slave. He was active in the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society. It was rumored that he escorted John Price to Canada after the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. Copeland later participated in the raid on the Harpers Ferry armory with John Brown. He got trapped in “Hall’s Rifle Works” along with his uncle Lewis Sheridan Leary and John Henry Kagi. When the 3 made a run for the Shenandoah River they got caught in a crossfire, but after Kagi had been killed and Leary had been shot several times and placed under arrest, Copeland was able to surrender without having been wounded. He refused to speak during his trial and was hanged with too short a drop and thus strangled slowly. On December 29, when a crowd of 3,000 would attend his funeral in his hometown of Oberlin, Ohio, there would be no body to bury, for after his cadaver had been temporarily interred in Charles Town it had been dug up and was in service in the instruction of students at the medical college in Winchester, Virginia. A monument was erected by the citizens of Oberlin in honor of their three fallen free citizens of color, Copeland, Leary, and Shields Green (the 8-foot marble monument would be moved to Vine Street Park in 1971). Judge Parker would assert in his story of the trials (St. Louis Globe Democrat, April 8, 1888) that Copeland had been “the prisoner who impressed me best. He was a free negro. He had been educated, and there was a dignity about him that I could not help liking. He was always manly.” Andrew Hunter at the same time was quoted as saying—“Copeland was the cleverest of all the prisoners ... and behaved better than any of them. If I had had the power and could have concluded to pardon any man among them, he was the man I would have picked out.” On the day that he died Copeland declared, “If I am dying for freedom, I could not die for a better cause — I had rather die than be a slave!” (Paul Finkelman avers on page 49 of HIS SOUL GOES MARCHING ON: RESPONSES TO JOHN BROWN AND THE HARPERS FERRY RAID that his middle name was “Anthony” rather than “Anderson.”)</p>						
Barclay Coppoc	Yes	No	No	Private	< 21	white
<p>Barclay Coppoc, from the Quaker settlement of Springdale, Iowa, was born in Salem, Ohio on January 4, 1839, and had not attained his majority at the time of the raid on Harpers Ferry. This Quaker escaped, although his adopted brother Edwin Coppoc surrendered and was tried and hanged. “We were together eight days before [John Edwin Cook and Albert Hazlett were] captured, which was near Chambersburg, and the next night Meriam [Francis Jackson Meriam] left us and went to Shippensburg, and there took cars for Philadelphia. After that there were but three of us left [John Brown’s son Owen Brown, Barclay Coppoc, and Charles Plummer Tidd], and we kept together, until we got to Centre County, Pennsylvania, where we bought a box and packed up all heavy luggage, such as rifles, blankets, etc., and after being together three or four weeks we separated and I went on through with the box to Ohio on the cars.” Osborn Perry Anderson, Barclay Coppoc, and Francis Jackson Meriam would travel separately to safe exile in the area of St. Catharines, Canada. Barclay then went to his family home in Iowa, with Virginia agents in close pursuit. There a band of young men armed themselves to defend him, and the Religious Society of Friends disowned him for bearing arms. He was back in “Bleeding Kansas” in 1860, helping to run off some Missouri slaves, and nearly lost his life in a second undertaking of this kind. He became a 1st Lieutenant in Colonel Montgomery’s regiment, the 3d Kansas Infantry. Soon he was killed by the fall of a train into the Platte river from a trestle 40 feet high, the supports of which had been burned away by Confederates.</p>						
Edwin Coppoc	Yes	Unwounded	Yes	Lieutenant	< 30	white



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Edwin Coppoc, who had been born on June 30, 1835 and orphaned and adopted at the age of 6 into a nonresistant-abolitionist Quaker farm family first of Salem, Ohio and then of Springdale, Iowa. On March 6, 1857 he was disowned by the Religious Society of Friends and in the spring of 1858 went to "Bleeding Kansas" as a settler — but did not take part in the fighting. It was during a visit to Springdale in the fall of 1858 that he met John Brown. He would surrender with Captain Brown in the engine house at Harpers Ferry, and would be tried by a jury of his white male peers immediately after the conclusion of the trial of Captain Brown while his still-Quaker brother Barclay Coppoc was eluding capture. He was sentenced on November 2. From prison before his hanging, he wrote his adoptive mother that he was</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"sorry to say that I was ever induced to raise a gun."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">THE QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONY</p> <p>He was hung with John Edwin Cook on December 16th, 1859 and a day later his brother turned up at home in Iowa (he also would soon be disowned). The body of Edwin Coppoc was buried in Winona, Iowa after a funeral attended by the entire town (later the body would be reburied in Salem, Ohio).</p>						
Richard Henry Dana, Jr.	No	No	No	Enabler		white
<p>Treason being punished as what it is, why would the downtown Boston lawyer Richard Henry Dana, Jr. allow himself to become legal counsel to a "Secret Six" committee that was funding the activities of Captain John Brown, as that loose cannon prepared to raid the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia? He was going to be implicated as having obviously had guilty prior knowledge, and was obviously making himself of necessity a prime candidate for the noose. As the going got hot he would make himself unavailable for prosecution —by venturing on a luxury trip around the globe— but the issue is not how he might extricate himself from this, but why he would have so endangered himself.</p>						
Martin Robison Delany	No	No	No	Supporter		of color
<p>Dr. Martin Robison Delany, Pennsylvania, 1843; attended the Colored National Convention of 1848; attended the Emigration Convention of 1854; a member of the Niger Valley Exploring Party in 1858; a member of the Vigilance Committee in Chatham and Windsor in September 1858. At a meeting of the conspirators in Chatham in Canada West in May 1858, "M.R. Delany," the Reverend William Charles Munroe of Detroit, and several other leaders of the large black expatriate community approved something termed the "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the people of the United States," as the charter for the pike-wielding fugitive society of raiders which was to be created in the remote fastness of the Allegheny Mountains by Captain John Brown subsequent to his raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. That document would be discovered on Brown's person when he was taken into custody. He would be a Major in the 104th Colored Infantry, and Sub-Assistant Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina, in 1865. He was a Freemason.</p>						
Frederick Douglass	No	No	No	Supporter	41	of color



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Waldo Emerson urged Frederick Douglass early on, to make himself into the General Toussaint Louverture of the North American continent. When Captain John Brown made a speech offering himself as the leader for the forces of freedom in "Bleeding Kansas", Douglass stood in the audience and endorsed Brown and his mission despite the unpleasant fact that the plan of the abolitionists was to permanently exclude all persons of color, whether free or enslaved, from that new state. When the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry was raided, his role was intended to be the raising aloft of the sword of General George Washington and the generaling of the black forces. His involvement in this raid was acceptable to such personages as the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher only because his blood, having been mixed with white, was removed to a degree from its original "low animal condition" (the Reverend's category, the Reverend's words) of blackness. At the very last moment, just as Harriet Tubman declined to attend because she had dreams in which Brown and his sons appeared as serpents, Douglass perceived that the prospects of the raid were for either failure or betrayal, and he fled by way of Canada to England.</p>						
Ralph Waldo Emerson	No	No	No	Supporter		white
<p>Waldo Emerson, acting as an <i>agent provocateur</i> of race war, recommended to Frederick Douglass in 1844 that he become the liberator of his people on the North American continent, modeling himself upon the leader of the successful Haitian revolution of the turn of the century, Toussaint Louverture. "Let me hold your coat while some white man kills you," or something to that effect. We only know about this because Henry Thoreau rushed down to Boston right after the lecture, and had the lecture printed up as a pamphlet — after which there was no lying about the provocation that had been made and so all Emerson could do was pretend that Douglass hadn't been present.</p>						
John Buchanan Floyd	No	No	No	Supporter		white
<p>Secretary of War John Buchanan Floyd was one of those who had been warned, months in advance, that Captain John Brown was planning to attack a federal arsenal to seize weapons with which to arm black slaves, in the creation of a servile insurrection (he didn't know precisely when, and didn't know it would be at Harpers Ferry, Virginia). Such a prospect did not alarm him in the slightest. The official story, if the official story is what you want to believe, is that our Secretary of War would pass this warning along to no-one. I myself find it difficult to regard this as anything more than a cover. I think the truth was that these folks were aware that such a servile insurrection could lead to nothing but a race genocide, with white Americans exterminating the black ones, and what I fear is that such a race genocide would have been considered to be just fine, an improvement in our national condition. Let's not have ourselves a civil war of brother against brother, that would be so nasty — let's prevent that by having ourselves a nice little race war!</p>						
Hugh Forbes	No	No	No	Lieutenant		white



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Captain John Brown's scheme, which he referred to as the "Subterranean Pass Way," was that the escaped, armed slaves were to "swarm" into and set up a center of resistance in the Alleghenies from which they could liberate Virginia and then invade Tennessee and northern Alabama. Such a scoping of the situation never met with much respect from other of the other schemers. In particular, the Scottish adventurer Hugh Forbes, Brown's onetime principal lieutenant, regarding blacks as inherently childlike, credulous, and cowardly, believed such a scheme to be doomed to failure from its inception. The scenario preferred by Forbes would have involved the herding of the slaves together by armed bands of white men and the driving of such herds of humans up the mountain chain toward Canada, neatly disposing of America's entire race problem — by simple relocation of it to another nation. Evidently the two planners parted company over issues such as this after Forbes had functioned in Tabor, Iowa as the leader of military training for the recruits (Forbes was a veteran of the Grenadier Guards, and had fought along with Garibaldi in defense of the Roman Republic of 1849), and then Forbes attempted blackmail. When not offered a payoff, he wrote long, detailed letters to congressmen and to others, and it is one of the unresolved issues, how anyone in high office in Washington DC could have avoided knowing in advance that Brown was plotting a strike of some sort against slavery (another of the unresolved issues is what happened to Forbes once his extortion had failed — he simply disappeared from the pages of history).</p>						
George B. Gill						
<p>George B. Gill had come to "Bleeding Kansas" in 1857 after whaling in the Pacific Ocean, and had there been recruited by John Brown. His name was among the signatories to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," from a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18th, 1859. He alarmed other conspirators by conducting himself in such manner as to attract attention and arouse suspicion, for instance displaying weapons, bragging to lady friends that he had been in Kansas and had killed 5 men, informing other boarders at his lodgings that he was in town on a secret expedition with other fighters, who were under his command, etc. During the year before the raid, Captain Brown sent Gill to visit a black con artist named Mr. Reynolds who persuaded Gill that he had gone through the South organizing and had brought into existence in areas of the South a militant organization of black men and women. Pointing out to Gill that Southern newspapers carried numerous references to the death of a favorite slave, he alleged that these were leaders of servile insurrection plots who were being discovered and offed. According to this "mumper," Southern blacks were ready and needed only to be given a cue. There is evidence that several slaves from the vicinity of the arsenal did participate in the raid itself, but returned hastily to their plantations when it became obvious that the raid was a failure. Several fires were set in the vicinity of Harpers Ferry in the week after the raid, probably by slaves and free black Americans (Richard Hinton estimates that \$10,000,000 was lost in the sale of Virginia slaves in the year 1859; census figures show that between 1850 and 1860 there was almost a 10% decline in blacks in the three counties surrounding Harpers Ferry, a period during which the total number of blacks in Maryland and Virginia was increasing by about 4%).</p>						
The Rev. and Mrs. Gloucester	No			Financial support		of color



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>The Reverend James Newton Gloucester and Elizabeth A. Parkhill Gloucester of Brooklyn, New York were wealthy financial supporters of the servile-insurrection plot of Captain John Brown, or "Shubel Morgan," or "Isaac Smith" (depending on what alias he was using at the time), and had put him up for a week at their home while he was enroute to Harpers Ferry. According to a report in a local newspaper:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Brown said, "Goodbye, Sister Gloucester. I've only sixteen men, but I'm to conquer." Mrs. Gloucester said to him, "Perhaps you will lose your life." "Well, my life," he replied, "is not worth much. I'm an old man. In Kansas, the balls flew around my head as thick as hail. I'll never be killed by a ball. If I fall, I'll open a ball in this country that will never stop until every slave is free."</p>						
Shields Green	Yes	No	Yes	Private	< 30	of color
<p>Shields Green was an escapee from South Carolina who had served as clothes cleaner in Rochester, New York (his business card there declared "I make no promise that I am unable to perform") and acted as a bodyguard for Frederick Douglass. He was known as "Emperor," although how he obtained this nickname is not now known. He decided to go with John Brown when Douglass turned back at the stone quarry prior to the Harpers Ferry raid, saying to his boss "I believe I'll go with the old man." He took part in the raid and then refused to speak during his trial. At the time of his hanging he was about 23 years of age. His cadaver would be dug up and used for the instruction of students at the medical college in Winchester, Virginia. He, like John Anderson Copeland, Jr. and Lewis Sheridan Leary, had been a resident of Oberlin, Ohio. A monument was erected by the citizens of Oberlin in honor of their 3 fallen free citizens of color (the 8-foot marble monument would be moved to Vine Street Park in 1971).</p>						
James Henry Harris						



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>No one associated with Captain John Brown, and no one associated with politics in North Carolina, has ever been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.</p> <p>“J.H. Harris” signed, as a member of a Vigilance Committee, on May 8th, 1858, the “Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States” in Chatham, Ontario West, Canada, a document which would be found on the person of John Brown when he was captured at Harpers Ferry on October 18th, 1859. Although another person of this name, James Henry Harris, had been born a slave in Granville County, North Carolina and had gained his freedom at the age of 18 in about 1848, he was not this “J.H. Harris.” Educated at Oberlin College, he would hold a teaching certificate from the New England Freedman’s Aid Society. He was of Cleveland in 1859, and a member of the 102d US Colored Infantry formed in Michigan by George DeBaptiste that included so many men from Chatham. He would attend the 1st Freedmen’s Convention in the South, held in what would become the St. Paul A.M.E. Church on Edenton Street in Raleigh during September 1865 as a representative of Wake County. He would become the 1st black alderman from Raleigh, and a delegate from Raleigh to the North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1868; he got married with Bettie Miller, a daughter of Addison J. Smith and Mary Anderson, a cousin of Osborn Perry Anderson; he died in 1891 in Washington DC and the remains are at Mount Hope Cemetery in Raleigh. There is yet a 3d James H. Harris, who was not this “J.H. Harris” signatory, who was belatedly awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and is interred in the remote section of Arlington National Cemetery that was reserved for colored soldiers, and for contrabands.</p>						
Lewis Hayden						
<p>Lewis Hayden, a black leader in downtown Boston whose escape from Kentucky had been aided by Delia Webster in 1844. Eight years after escaping from slavery, he raised, as an act of gratitude and duty, a sum of \$650, in order to ransom the Reverend Calvin Fairbanks out of the Kentucky State Prison at Frankfort, where the Reverend had been languishing under the accusation that he had assisted 47 slaves in their escape, and had served 14 years, and had been whipped and beaten. Just before the raid on Harpers Ferry, Hayden helped recruit Francis Jackson Meriam to carry a message and cash money to the hideout of John Brown, and take part in that struggle.</p>						
Albert Hazlett	Yes	No	Yes	Capt. or Lt.	< 30	white





RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Albert Hazlett, born in Pennsylvania on September 21st, 1837, did not take part in the fight at Harpers Ferry but, with John Edwin Cook who had escaped from that fight by climbing a tree and who later identified him to the prosecutors, would be belatedly hanged. Before the raid he had worked on his brother's farm in western Pennsylvania, and he had joined the others at Kennedy Farm in the early part of September 1859. He was arrested on October 22d in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, near Chambersburg, where he was using the name "William Harrison," was extradited to Virginia, was tried and sentenced at the spring term of the Court, and was hanged on March 16th, 1860. George B. Gill wrote "I was acquainted with Hazlett well enough in Kansas, yet after all knew but little of him. He was with Montgomery considerably, and was with [Aaron D. Stevens] on the raid in which Cruise was killed. He was a good-sized, fine-looking fellow, overflowing with good nature and social feelings.... Brown got acquainted with him just before leaving Kansas." He wrote to Mrs. Rebecca B. Spring on March 15th, 1860, the eve of his hanging, "Your letter gave me great comfort to know that my body would be taken from this land of chains.... I am willing to die in the cause of liberty, if I had ten thousand lives I would willingly lay them all down for the same cause."</p>						
Reverend T. W. Higginson	No					White
<p>The Reverend Thomas Wentworth "Charles P. Carter" Higginson of the Secret "Six"'s earliest American ancestor was the 1st minister of Salem. He believed that "Never in history was there an oppressed people who were set free by others" (it was therefore up to American black people to demonstrate their courage, and their worthiness to be free — basically by getting themselves exterminated). After Harpers Ferry he would attempt to organize an expedition to raid the Charles Town lockup and rescue the accused — this was an expedition Henry Thoreau would oppose, asserting that to the contrary Captain Brown's highest and best purpose was to be hung.</p>						
Richard J. Hinton						
<p>Richard Josiah Hinton, abolitionist journalist whose opposition to slavery led him to transform himself into a gunslinger. Refer to: Richard J. Hinton, JOHN BROWN AND HIS MEN (NY: Funk & Wagnalls, 1894; Reprint NY: The Arno Press, 1968).</p> <div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>WHAT TO TAKE: Let your trunk, if you have to buy one, be of moderate size and of the strongest make. Test it by throwing it from the top of a three-storied house; if you pick it up uninjured, it will do to go to Kansas. Not otherwise.</p> <p>— James Redpath and Richard J. Hinton, HAND-BOOK TO KANSAS TERRITORY, 1859, as quoted on page 3 of William Least Heat-Moon's PrairyErth (a deep map) [Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1991].</p> </div>						
Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe						



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe and others of the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee raised \$5,000 in one day, to buy enough Sharp's rifles to arm 200 men to the teeth in "Bleeding Kansas." He, as well as the Reverend Theodore Parker, Franklin Benjamin Sanborn, Gerrit Smith, and George Luther Stearns, fully grasped from the earliest moment the fact that the probable result of their attempt to incite a race war (black Americans against white), would be, at least initially, a defeat of the black forces of servile insurrection. These 5 of the white conspirators of the Secret "Six" finance committee clearly had been willing to sacrifice the lives of their black allies in order to foment sectional civil war between Northern and Southern white Americans.</p>						
Julia Ward Howe	No					White
<p>Julia Ward Howe was a racist and, because she carried out errands for her husband Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe who was on the Secret "Six" finance committee (such as having a surreptitious meeting in their home with Captain John Brown), must surely have been aware of and must surely have approved of that committee's agendas.</p>						
Thaddeus Hyatt	No					white
<p>Thaddeus Hyatt was a businessman and financier involved in the preparation of "Bleeding Kansas" as a "free soil" or "Aryan Nation" enclave. Summoned to give testimony before the congressional committee investigating the raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, he would refuse to appear and would be imprisoned for a period—but ultimately would get away with this refusal.</p>						
John Jones	No	No	No	Support		of color
<p>John Jones was a Chicago businessman of mixed race, an upscale tailor (John Brown visited his home). He and his wife Mary Jane Richardson Jones were active abolitionists whose home was a station on the Underground Railroad while they agitated for repeal of "Black Laws" (not only did these laws obligate black Americans to prove that they were free to enter the state of Illinois but, once there, these laws barred them from visiting the homes of whites, owning any property or merchandise, or entering into any contract).</p>						
John Henry Kagi	Yes	Yes		Secretary of War	24	white



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Although John Henry Kagi, AKA Maurice Maitland, AKA John Henrie, was largely self-taught, his letters to the New-York Tribune, the New-York Evening Post, and the National Era reveal him as the best educated of the raiders. A debater, public speaker, stenographer, wannabee writer, and total abstainer from alcohol, he was cold in manner and rough in appearance. A nonparticipant in organized religion, he was an able man of business. He had been born on March 15, 1835, a son of the blacksmith for Bristolville, Ohio in a family of Swiss descent (the name originally having been Kagy). During 1854/1855 he had taught school at Hawkinstown, Virginia but had indicated an objection to the system of slavery there and been compelled to return to Ohio with a pledge never to return. He had gone to Nebraska City in 1856 and been admitted to the bar. He then entered Kansas with one of General James H. Lane's parties and enlisted in Aaron D. Stevens's ("Colonel Whipple's") 2d Kansas Militia. In fighting in the town of Tecumseh in "Bleeding Kansas" he proved himself by killing at least one man, who had been coming after him with a club. After being captured by US troops he had been imprisoned at Lecompton and at Tecumseh, but was finally released. On January 31, 1857 he had been struck on the head with a gold-headed cane by a slaveowning territorial judge, drew his revolver and shot the judge in the groin, but Judge Phisic Rush Elmore got off 3 shots and one struck Kagi over the heart, the bullet being stopped by a memorandum-book. He was long with his family in Ohio recovering from these wounds, but then returned to Kansas and joined John Brown. He bore the title of Secretary of War in the provisional government and was next in command to John Brown; he was also the adjutant. His name was among the signatories to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," from a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18, 1859. When in Chambersburg as agent for the raiders, he boarded with Mrs. Mary Rittner. "In a very few days we shall commence," he wrote on the eve of the raid, "things could not be more cheerful and more certain of success than they are. We have worked hard and suffered much, but the hardest is down now, and a glorious success is in sight.... Be cheerful. Don't imagine dangers. All will be well." At Harpers Ferry he was trapped along with John Anderson Copeland, Jr. and Lewis Sheridan Leary in the armory called Hall's Rifle Works. When the 3 made a run for it, heading down to the Shenandoah River, they got caught in crossfire and Kagi was the first killed, shot in the head, his body being left to float in the river.</p>						
Amos Lawrence	No					White
<p>Amos Lawrence and his son Amos Adams Lawrence provided the large bulk of the investment capital needed by Eli Thayer's New England Emigrant Aid Company for the purchase land in the new territory then well known as "Bleeding Kansas," needed in order to encourage the right sort of black-despising poor white Americans to settle there as "decent antislavery" homesteaders. The idea was to send entire communities in one fell swoop, increasing the value of the properties owned by this company. If political control over this territory could be achieved, they would be able to set up a real Aryan Nation, from which slaves would of course be excluded because they were enslaved, and from which free blacks Americans would of course be excluded because as human material they were indelibly inferior.</p>						
Lewis Sheridan Leary	Yes	Yes		Private	25	of color





RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Lewis Sheridan "Shad" Leary was a mulatto citizen of Oberlin, Ohio, a saddler and harness maker whose father had been a freeborn black harness maker as well. He was descended from an Irishman, Jeremiah O'Leary, who had fought in the Revolution under General Nathanael Greene of Rhode Island, who had married a woman of mixed blood, partly African, partly of that Croatan Indian stock of North Carolina, which is believed by some to be lineally descended from the "lost colonists" left by John White on Roanoke Island in 1587. Leary was born at Fayetteville, North Carolina on March 17th, 1835, and was therefore in his 25th year when killed during the raid upon the federal arsenal. In 1857 he had gone to Oberlin to live, marrying there and making the acquaintance of John Brown in Cleveland. To go to Harpers Ferry he left his wife with a 6-month-old child at Oberlin, his wife being in ignorance of the purpose of his trip. He was given funds to go from Oberlin to Chambersburg in the company of his nephew John Anderson Copeland, Jr. "Tell no man where I have gone," he commented, "you'll see me again, but I'll be marching at the top of the drum.... Men must suffer for a good cause." He was isolated along with his nephew and John Henry Kagi in the armory called Hall's Rifle Works. When the men made a run for it, heading down to the Shenandoah River, they got themselves caught in a crossfire, and after Kagi had been killed and Leary shot several times, he was taken, his wounds so severe that he would die the following morning. He was able to dictate messages to his family and is reported as having said "I am ready to die." The Leary child would subsequently be educated by James Redpath and Wendell Phillips. The corpse was dumped into the common pit beside the Shenandoah River, not to be exhumed until 1899. A monument was erected by the citizens of Oberlin in honor of their fallen free men of color, Leary, Copeland, and Shields Green (this 8-foot marble monument would be relocated to Vine Street Park in 1971).</p>						
William H. Leeman	Yes	Yes		Captain	< 21	white
<p>William H. Leeman was of a wild disposition. Educated in the public schools of Saco and Hallowell, Maine, by the age of 14 he was working in a shoe factory in Haverhill, Massachusetts. He went to "Bleeding Kansas" with the 2d batch of recruits from Massachusetts, and on September 9, 1856 became a member of Captain John Brown's "Volunteer Regulars." He fought well at Osawatomic when but 17 years of age. At Springdale, Iowa, Owen Brown found him full of swagger and bluster and difficult to control George B. Gill said of him that he had "a good intellect with great ingenuity." He signed "W.H. Leeman" to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," per a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when the raiders were subdued at Harpers Ferry. By the raid upon Harpers Ferry he had reached the age of 20, the youngest of the raiders. He wrote his mother, "I shall be in danger, but it is natural to me. I shall not get killed. I am in a good cause, and I am not afraid." He made a mad dash out of the relative safety of the armory to attempt to escape by swimming down the Potomac River, where two militiamen caught up with him and shot him down on an islet. For hours his corpse would be used for target practice by drunken citizens, until their hail of bullets pushed the riddled remains into a current that drew it along until only his black hair could be glimpsed in the ripples on the surface. Mrs. Annie Brown Adams would write of him: "He was only a boy. He smoked a good deal and drank sometimes; but perhaps people would not think that so very wicked now. He was very handsome and very attractive."</p>						
Francis Jackson Merriam	Yes	No	No	Private	< 30	white



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Francis Jackson Meriam, grandson and namesake of the Garrisonian abolitionist and Boston historian Francis Jackson, was a young manic-depressive with one good eye. He helped James Redpath collect materials in Haiti and across the American South for use in a book dedicated to John Brown and Redpath arranged for him to join the Harpers Ferry guerrillas. He was not captured or killed because he had been left during the raid in one of his fits of despair at the Kennedy farmhouse. After escaping through Shippensburg, Philadelphia, Boston, Concord, and the area of St. Catharines, Canada he served as a captain in the 3d South Carolina Colored Infantry. Erratic and unbalanced, he urged wild schemes upon his superiors and sometimes attempted them. He created, for instance, a list of 5 secret-writing inks for confidential correspondence. In an engagement under General Ulysses S. Grant he received a serious leg wound. He died suddenly on November 28, 1865 in New-York.</p>						
Charles W. Moffett	Yes					white
<p>We believe that the name of Charles W. Moffett of Iowa was among the signatories to Chatham, Ontario's "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States" as "C.W. Moffit," per a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18, 1859. Perhaps this "W" stood for "Wesley," if we can rely upon a tombstone in the Maple Hill cemetery in Montour, Iowa ("Charles Wesley Moffett / Jun. 20, 1827-Aug. 19, 1904"). We wonder if perhaps he did not attend the raid on the federal arsenal because he got cold feet, or perhaps because he was one of a number of people suspected by the others of having written to alert Secretary of War John Buchanan Floyd to the plan for a raid on a federal arsenal (the Cabinet member received these warnings while at Red Sweet Springs in Virginia and neglected to alert anyone to be on the lookout for such an attack — he would remind people later that as War Secretary he had been getting a whole lot of spurious warnings).</p>						
Edwin Morton	No					White
<p>The very tall Franklin Benjamin Sanborn's intimate college friend Edwin Morton of Plymouth, a descendant of one of the prominent Founding Fathers, and from a long line of violinists, was about as deeply involved in the Harpers Ferry raid as any member of the Secret "Six." He was Gerrit Smith's private secretary and resided with that family, tutoring the son. After the raid, with the heat on while Jefferson Davis was conducting a congressional investigation, he fled overseas as did Frederick Douglass, and for the duration chummed around at Shrewsbury and Hodnet with Henry Thoreau's very tall friend Thomas Cholmondeley before settling for health reasons in Switzerland.</p>						
Dangerfield Newby	Yes	Yes		bridge sentinel	39	light mulatto



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Dangerfield Newby, a free light mulatto, son of a Scotsman, very tall and with a splendid physique, was written by his wife begged him to obtain funds to purchase her and their baby who that had just “commenced to crawl ... as soon as possible, for if you do not get me somebody else will.” She pleaded “Oh Dear Dangerfield, come this fall without fail, money or no money I want to see you so much; that is the one bright hope I have before me.” He was serving as a sentinel at the Harpers Ferry bridge and was shot to death as he and the two white men with him retreated before the charge of the Jefferson Guards of Charles Town, Virginia, coming across the Potomac from the Maryland side. He was not brought down by ball or bullet but by a 6-inch spike being used as a musket projectile, which caught him in the throat and ripped him severely. Since neither of the white men were shot, it appears that as a mulatto he was targeted. The body was beaten savagely, and its ears snipped off as trophies, and then a herd of hogs was driven up to root on it. His corpse was dumped into the shallow group pit beside the Shenandoah River, to be exhumed in 1899.</p>						
Reverend Theodore Parker	No					White
<p>The Reverend Theodore Parker, a stone racist, declared from his pulpit that while he ordinarily spent \$1,500 a year on books, the equivalent of 4 or 5 men’s annual wages, for the time being he was going to restrict himself to spending less than one man’s annual wage on books per year, and devote the remaining moneys to the purchase of guns and ammunition for the white people going to the Kansas Territory. Sharps rifles, the very latest in deadliness, cost \$25 apiece when had in sufficient quantity:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“I make all my pecuniary arrangements with the expectation of civil war.”</i></p> <p>He would take to marking the boxes of new Sharps rifles he shipped illegally to “Bleeding Kansas” with the word BOOKS, and he would take to referring to these firearms as so many copies of RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE as in “The right of the people to keep and to bear arms shall not be infringed.” He, as well as Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, Franklin Benjamin Sanborn, Gerrit Smith, and George Luther Stearns of the Secret “Six”, fully grasped from the earliest moment the fact that the probable result of their attempt to incite a race war, of black Americans against white Americans, would be, at least initially, a defeat of the black forces of servile insurrection. These 5 of the white conspirators clearly had been willing to sacrifice the lives of their allies among the Northern and Southern black Americans slave and free, in order to foment a rectification of the Southern white Americans.</p>						
Luke F. Parsons						White
<p>Luke Fisher Parsons was a free-state fighter seasoned in “Bleeding Kansas.” He took part in the battle of Black Jack near Baldwin City on June 2d, 1856, the battle of Osawatimie on August 30th, 1856, and the raid on Iowa during Winter 1857/1858. His name “L.F. Parsons” was among the signatories to “Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States,” per a document in John Brown’s handwriting that would be captured when the raiders were subdued at Harpers Ferry. He had gone off toward a supposed Colorado gold rush and, summoned by letters from Brown and Kagi, did not manage to make it back to take part in the raid on the federal arsenal, or to attempt to rescue the prisoners once they were waiting to be hanged, at the jail in Charlestown, Virginia. He started a family and lived out a long life as a farmer in Salina, Kansas.</p>						



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
Friend John Hunt Painter						White
<p>John Hunt Painter, a birthright Quaker who owned a farm near Springdale, Iowa, a farm that was used as a waystation on the Underground Railroad, forwarded stored firearms to Captain John Brown at his hideout near Harpers Ferry. After disownment by the Religious Society of Friends he would relocate his farm family to downtown Pasadena, California to there construct and be the proprietor of the toney <i>La Pintoresca</i> hotel.</p>						
Richard Realf						White
<p>Richard Realf, English poet, was the son of a blacksmith who had become a rural constable. In 1852 he had published <i>GUESSES AT THE BEAUTIFUL</i> and in 1854, after giving up being the lover of George Gordon, Lord Byron's aging widow Lady Noell Byron, he had been led to the United States of America by "instincts" he characterized as "democratic and republican, or, at least, anti-monarchical." At the end of November or beginning of December 1857 he had been introduced to John Brown in Mount Tabor, Iowa by John Edwin Cook, whom he had met in Lawrence in "Bleeding Kansas" while working as a correspondent for the Illinois State Gazette. He traveled through Chicago and Detroit to Chatham, Ontario West, Canada and signed the "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," per a document in Brown's handwriting found when the survivors were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18th, 1859. By reading a book of ethical philosophy written by the President of Brown University, he determined that this violent agenda, and radical abolitionism in general, were a forbidden path, and so he returned to England to lecture, and visited France. He embarked at Le Havre on March 2d, 1859, arriving at New Orleans on April 17th, 1959 with the intention of becoming a Jesuit priest, then with an aim to join the Shakers, and made no further contact with Captain Brown. After the raid he would voluntarily testify before the US Senate Committee and then fight in the Civil War and then contemplate joining the Oneida Perfectionists and then attempt to become a Colonel of colored troops, before being laid low on account of his messy sexual life.</p>						
James Redpath						
<p>James Redpath, crusading journalist out to make a buck in the best way. –Panderer in the pornography of armchair violence, at first in regard to the horrors of Southern slavery, –then in regard to the horrors of "Bleeding Kansas" –then in regard to the horrors of starving Ireland. Finally, after the Civil War, without fresh horrors to proffer to his armchair audience, he would resort to publishing defamatory doggerel poetry — lines in which he age-shames and fat-shames various Boston society ladies. –Never a dull moment for this "tell it like it is" dude! The Charleston, Virginia hangman sent him a piece of the scaffold, for which he devised a label: "A Bit of the True Cross, a Chip from the Scaffold of John Brown."</p>						
George J. Reynolds						of color



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>George J. Reynolds was a light mulatto with native American as well as black African heritage, a blacksmith or coppersmith, from Virginia although claiming to be from Vermont, aged about 35 at the time of the raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, and active in the Underground Railroad. He attended the Convention of Colored Men in 1858, and signed the “Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States” in Chatham, Ontario West, Canada per a document in John Brown’s handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued on October 18th, 1859, as “J.G. Reynolds” (3 weeks after signing on to this conspiracy he was disclosing some of Captain Brown’s agenda to a black secret paramilitary group at the Masonic Lodge of his home town, Sandusky, Ohio).</p>						
Richard Richardson	No					of color
<p>Richard Richardson, a fugitive slave from Lexington, Missouri who had joined John Brown in southern Iowa, was going through that unfortunate but now-well-understood initial period of reaction to freedom in which a former slave, accustomed to servitude and unaccustomed to self-origination, attaches himself to some authoritative white man who is able with courtesy to make use of him. He had been in 1858 a member of the African Mysteries, a secret defense group in Michigan, and signed the “Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States” in Chatham, per a document in Brown’s handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued on October 18th, 1859, but evidently because of a religious conversion and a dedication to missionary work in Canada did not get from Ontario to Harpers Ferry (of the 34 black signatories to the Chatham document, only Osborn Perry Anderson would be at Harpers Ferry). He became a private in Company E of the 113th US Colored Infantry formed from the 13th US Colored Infantry, that was recruited in Arkansas and provided Civil War post and garrison duty in Little Rock, Arkansas, mustering out on April 9th, 1866.</p>						
Judge Thomas Russell	No					White
<p>Thomas Russell and Mary Ellen “Nellie” Taylor Russell visited John Brown in jail in Charleston, Virginia a few weeks before his execution. She said that although she had never approved of his violent methods, she admired him as a man of vision and idealism. Brown had been friends with the Russells for years and had stayed at their home on several occasions despite the husband being prominent in the Massachusetts judiciary. Franklin Benjamin Sanborn of the Secret “Six” would allege long after the raid on Harpers Ferry that “Brown’s general purpose of attacking slavery by force, in Missouri or elsewhere, was known in 1857-8-9” to Judge Russell.</p>						
Franklin Benjamin Sanborn	No					White



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Franklin Benjamin Sanborn of Concord descended from the founder and 1st minister of the old New Hampshire plantation of Hampton. Another ancestor, the Reverend Stephen Bachiler, was the 1st minister of Lynn, and probably had among his parishioners there, in 1635-1636, Thomas Parker, the 1st American ancestor of Theodore Parker. He, as well as Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, the Reverend Theodore Parker, Gerrit Smith, and George Luther Stearns, fully grasped from the earliest moment the fact that the probable result of their attempt to incite a race war, of black Americans against white Americans, would be, at least initially, a defeat of their black forces. These 5 of the white Secret "Six" conspirators clearly had been willing to sacrifice the lives of their black allies for servile insurrection in order to foment sectional civil war between Northern and Southern white Americans. (John Brown, who had himself buried a wife and promptly recruited another one, once commented to Sanborn, in regard to the young man's grief over the prompt death of his young bride Ariana Walker, that he was too young to be married to a gravestone.)</p>						
Gerrit Smith	No					White
<p>The immensely wealthy "H. Ross Perot" political figure of that era was a former Millerite millennialist: Gerrit Smith. In this American's mansion outside Syracuse, New York, standing in the center of his study, was an ornate mahogany desk. Rumor had it that this had once been the desk of the emperor Napoleon Bonaparte himself. The millennium of William Miller not having arrived on schedule, Smith had become determined to, as he put it, "make himself a colored man" –he desired to explore his inner blackness– and thus he befriended Frederick Douglass (Smith would be Douglass's friend, that is, up to the point at which he would discover that black Americans were inherently racially inferior to white Americans and thus unworthy of consideration). He, as well as Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, the Reverend Theodore Parker, Franklin Benjamin Sanborn, and George Luther Stearns of the Secret "Six" fully grasped from the earliest moment that the probable result of their attempt to incite a servile insurrection of black Americans against white Americans, would be, at least initially, a defeat of the black forces. These 5 of the white conspirators clearly had been willing to sacrifice the lives of their black allies, in order to disrupt relations between Northern and Southern white Americans, toward the generation of a sectional civil war.</p>						
Stephen Smith	No			support		of color



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Located just north of the Mason/Dixon line separating Pennsylvania from slaveholding states such as Maryland, the town of Columbia would be an important stop on the Underground Railroad. In 1818 its citizens had begun a Columbia Abolition Society. Stephen Smith had in 1831 led free blacks in Columbia in a public meeting in opposition to the agenda of the American Colonization Society. In 1834 he had joined with David Ruggles, John Peck, Abraham Shadd, and John B. Vashon, who were the initial black agents for Freedom's Journal and later for The Emancipator. In that year and the following one there were riots in Columbia, white riots that made a particular target of the lumberyard of the successful "Black Steve" and his mulatto partner William Whipper, and in 1835 the Columbia Spy would report that his success had so "excited the envy or hatred of those not so prosperous and of the ruling race" that his office was vandalized and papers, records, and books destroyed. Smith relocated to Philadelphia leaving the business in Columbia under Whipper's management, and would soon again be prospering. When abolitionists found it difficult to secure a building to hold their meetings, Smith made Pennsylvania Hall available for their use, but on July 17, 1838 a mob of white citizens torched that venue. Taking advantage of a little-known Pennsylvania statute by which a municipality could be held liable for mob damage, Smith sued Philadelphia, obtaining a judgment for damages in excess of what the building had cost: \$75,000. Dun and Company, a firm that evaluated local businesses, would in 1857 estimate Smith and Whipper's annual sales at \$100,000, characterizing Smith as "King of the Darkies." He was on his way to becoming one of the wealthiest black Americans in 19th-Century Pennsylvania. John Brown met with Stephen Smith and others while passing through Philadelphia.</p>						
Lysander Spooner	No					white
<p>The anarchist (or, to deploy a more recent term, libertarian) Boston attorney Lysander Spooner, who was well aware of John Brown's plans for the raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, wrote to Gerrit Smith during January 1859 warning that Brown had neither the men nor the resources to succeed. After the raid he would plot the kidnapping of Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia, the idea being to take him at pistol point aboard a tug and hold him off the Atlantic coast at threat of execution should Brown be hanged. The motto he chose for himself, that might well be inscribed on his tombstone in Forest Hills Cemetery, was from the INSTITUTES of the Emperor Justinian I of the eastern Roman Empire: "To live honestly is to hurt no one, and give to every one his due."</p>						
George Luther Stearns	No			finance		white
<p>George Luther Stearns, a Boston manufacturer of lead pipe and the secretary of the Boston Emancipation League, as well as Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, the Reverend Theodore Parker, Franklin Benjamin Sanborn, and Gerrit Smith of the Secret "Six," fully grasped from the earliest moment the fact that the probable result of their attempt to incite a race war, of black Americans against white Americans, would be, at least initially, a defeat of their black forces. These 5 of the white conspirators clearly had been willing to sacrifice the lives of their black allies in servile insurrection in order to forestall a sectional civil war between Northern and Southern white Americans.</p>						
Aaron Dwight Stevens	Yes	Badly wounded	Yes	Captain	28	white



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Aaron Dwight Stevens, John Brown's drillmaster, was of old Puritan stock, his great-grandfather having served as a captain during the Revolution. He had run away from home at the age of 16 to serve with a Massachusetts volunteer regiment during the Mexican War. Well over 6 feet, he made himself proficient with the sword. Enlisted in Company F of the 1st US Dragoons, he became their bugler, but at Taos, New Mexico during 1855 he received a sentence of death for "mutiny, engaging in a drunken riot, and assaulting Major George [Alexander Hamilton] Blake." This was commuted by President Franklin Pierce to 3 years hard labor but he escaped from Fort Leavenworth in 1856, 1st finding refuge with the Delaware tribe and then joining the Kansas Free State militia of James Lane under the name "Whipple." He became Colonel of the 2d Kansas Militia and met Brown on August 7th, 1856 at the Nebraska line when Lane's Army of the North marched into "Bleeding Kansas". He became a devoted follower. He was a spiritualist. At Harpers Ferry, when Brown sent this middleaged man out along with his son Watson Brown to negotiate under a flag of truce, he received 4 bullets but was taken alive. The never-married Stevens had a relationship of sorts with Rebecca B. Spring of the Eagleswood social experiment near Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and after his execution on March 16th would be buried there alongside Albert Hazlett. According to George B. Gill, writing after his death, "Stevens — how gloriously he sang! His was the noblest soul I ever knew. Though owing to his rash, hasty way, I often found occasion to quarrel with him more so than with any of the others, and though I liked [John Henry Kagi] better than any man I ever knew, our temperaments being adapted to each other, yet I can truly say that Stevens was the most noble man that I ever knew." He was not a 2d time reprieved by the President, and was hanged on March 16th, 1860.</p>						
Stewart Taylor	Yes	Yes		Private	23	white
<p>Stewart Taylor went in 1853 to Iowa, where in 1858 he became acquainted with Captain Brown through George B. Gill. He was a very good phonographer [stenographer], rapid and accurate. A spiritualist, he confidently predicted his own death. He signed the "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States" in Chatham, Ontario, Canada West per a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18th, 1859. A relative, Jacob L. Taylor of Pine Orchard, Canada West, wrote to Richard J. Hinton on April 23d, 1860 that he had been "heart and soul in the anti-slavery cause." An excellent debater and very fond of studying history, he stayed at home in Canada during Winter 1858/1859 and then went to Chicago, thence to Bloomington, Illinois and thence to Harper's [sic] Ferry." While out of touch with the others, this 23-year-old had feared being left behind: "I felt as though I was deprived of my chief object in life.... I believe that fate has decreed me for this undertaking.... It is my chief desire to add fuel to the fire." Mortally wounded in the engine house, begging to be put out of his misery, Brown instructed him "Die like a man." What remained of his corpse would be recovered in 1899 from a soggy group pit near the Shenandoah River above Harpers Ferry.</p>						
Eli Thayer	No			politics		white



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR



Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Representative Eli Thayer formed the New England Emigrant Aid Company to purchase sections of the new territory then known as "Bleeding Kansas" and encourage the right sort of black-despising poor white "decent antislavery" Americans to settle there, by providing information, cheapening transportation, and setting up saw mills and flour mills to give work and incomes to such homesteaders. The idea was to send entire communities in one fell swoop, thereby increasing the value of the real estate of this company. If political control could be achieved, they would be able to set up a real Aryan Nation from which American slaves would of course be excluded because they were enslaved, and from which free blacks Americans would of course be excluded because as human material they were indelibly inferior. This government officeholder would comment after the Civil War, in regard to the abolitionists with whom he had been aligned, that he had never observed "any diffidence or modesty in sounding their own praises. They formed a mutual admiration society possessed by an unusual malignity towards those who did not belong to it."</p>						
Dauphin Adolphus Thompson	Yes	Yes		Lieutenant	< 30	white
<p>Dauphin Adolphus Thompson and his brothers Henry Thompson and William Thompson were North Elba neighbors of the family of John Brown. He was "very quiet, with fair, thoughtful face, curly blonde hair, and baby-blue eyes," a "pippin-cheeked country boy." His sister Isabella M. Thompson got married with Watson Brown and his elder brother Henry Thompson got married with Captain Brown's daughter Ruth. "I suppose the folk think we are a set of fools," he wrote from someplace he described as "Parts Unknown," "but they will find out we know what we are about." The two brothers died at Harpers Ferry, Dauphin cowering beneath a fire engine until skewered by a Marine bayonet. Their bodies would be placed in the common pit beside the Shenandoah River above town, and exhumed in 1899.</p>						
William Thompson	Yes	Yes		Captain?	< 30	white
<p>William Thompson was born in New Hampshire in August 1833, the son of Roswell Thompson. During Fall 1858 he married a Mary Brown who was not related to the family of John Brown. His sister Isabella M. Thompson married Watson Brown; his elder brother Henry Thompson married Captain Brown's daughter Ruth. He "would have made a successful comic actor ... he was very lively and full of funny stories and jokes." He had started for "Bleeding Kansas" in 1856 but upon meeting the Brown sons returned with them to North Elba. Along with his brother Dauphin Adolphus Thompson, he took part in the raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, and the two of them were killed. When Captain Brown sent him out from the engine house to negotiate under flag of truce, the mob of citizens placed him under arrest, took him to the local hotel barroom, discussed what to do, dragged him into the street, executed him by shooting him in the head, and dumped his body onto the rocks of the Potomac River. The corpse "could be seen lying at the bottom of the river, with his ghastly face still showing what a fearful death agony he had experienced." One of his captors commented that for such "villainous Abolitionists," he "felt justified in shooting any that I could find. I felt it my duty, and I have no regrets." His corpse and that of his brother were dumped into a common pit on the bank of the Shenandoah River above town and covered with about a foot of soil.</p>						
Henry David Thoreau	No					white



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>When, in 1844, Waldo Emerson, acting as an <i>agent provocateur</i>, recommended to Frederick Douglass's face that, modeling himself upon the leader of the successful Haitian revolution of the turn of the century, Toussaint Louverture, he fashion himself into the liberator of his people and initiate on the North American continent a servile insurrection or race war, it was Henry Thoreau who after the lecture rushed this information right down to Boston, and had a pamphlet printed up, after which there was no way to dissimulate about the provocation that had been made — and so all Emerson was able to do was pretend that Douglass hadn't been present. (We, of course, have credited Emerson's cover story, not because there is any corroboration for it but because ... well, he's Mr. Emerson and wouldn't lie to us.)</p>						
Charles Plummer Tidd	Yes	No	No	Captain	25	white
<p>Charles Plummer Tidd joined John Brown's party at Mount Tabor and Springdale, Iowa in 1857. He was one of the followers of "Shubel Morgan" who raided into Missouri in 1858. He signed, as "Charles P. Tidd," the "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States" in Chatham, Canada per a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18th, 1859. He opposed the attack on Harpers Ferry but nevertheless took part in the raid on the planter Washington's home and on the federal arsenal, escaped, and made his way on foot toward the northwestern part of Pennsylvania. He and Owen Brown would find work and safety, under assumed names, on an oil well in the vicinity of Crawford County, Pennsylvania. He visited Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Canada and took part in the planning for the rescue of Aaron D. Stevens and Albert Hazlett while the Mason Commission of the Congress was presuming that he had been killed in the fighting at the ferry. According to Mrs. Annie Brown Adams, "Tidd had not much education, but good common sense. After the raid he began to study, and tried to repair his deficiencies. He was by no means handsome. He had a quick temper, but was kind-hearted. His rages soon passed and then he tried all he could to repair damages. He was a fine singer and of strong family affections." On July 19th, 1861 he was able to enlist under the name "Charles Plummer" and would become a 1st Sergeant of the 21st Massachusetts Volunteers. On February 8th, 1862 he died of fever aboard the transport <i>Northerner</i> during the battle of Roanoke Island. (This was a battle he had particularly wished to take part in because ex-Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia, the nemesis of the Harpers Ferry raiders, was in command of the Confederates.) Tidd's, or Charles Plummer's, grave is #40 in the National Cemetery in New Berne, North Carolina.</p>						
Harriet Tubman	No					of color
<p>John Brown negotiated with Harriet Tubman to obtain her participation in the raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. She mistrusted these men and had persistent dreams in which Brown and his sons appeared as serpents. The attack had been scheduled to occur on the 4th of July, symbolic of national birth. At the last moment she alleged she was ill, and for this reason as well as delays in the deliveries of supplies, the attack needed to be postponed for months (Frederick Douglass would also back out). On the day of the actual attack she had a premonition that it was going to fail.</p>						
Henry Watson	No					of color



RACE WAR,

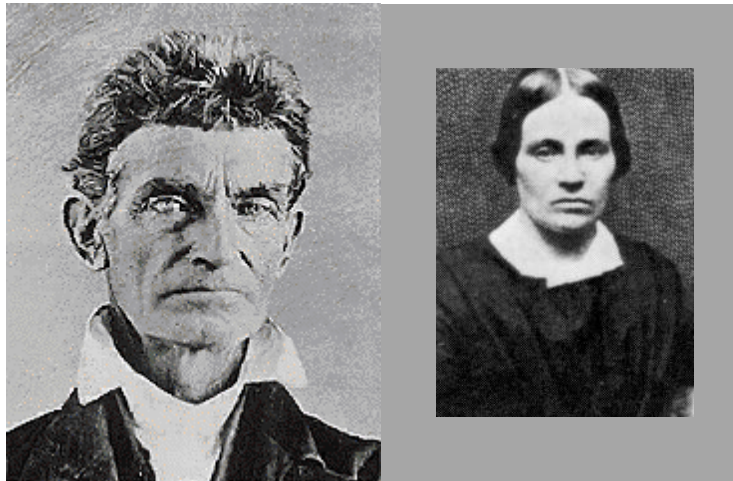
NOT CIVIL WAR

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Henry Watson, black barber in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, had, in 1859, in his barbershop and home, about \$500 in property that was at risk due to his Underground Railroad activity. On August 19th, 1859 he led Frederick Douglass and his bodyguard Shields Green to the quarry where John Brown and his bodyguard John Henry Kagi were posing as fishermen. The barber and his wife had no children. After the failure of the raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Osborn Perry Anderson would find refuge in their home on Mt. Moriah Street in the “Little Africa” district of Green Township, near Chambersburg. On December 18th, 1863 the barber, at the age of 50, would be mustered into the 29th Regiment of the Connecticut Colored Infantry. On March 8th, 1864 that unit would be put into service with him as a private in Company E. On March 19th, 1864 they would travel from Fair Haven, Connecticut to Annapolis, Maryland. From there they would go to Beaufort, South Carolina, where they would remain from April 13th, 1864 to August 8th, 1864. From there they would journey into Virginia, where they would participate in the Siege of Petersburg from August 13th, 1864 to April 2d, 1865. From there they would journey to Point Lookout, Maryland, where they would guard prisoners until May 28th, 1865. During his absence from Chambersburg, Confederate troops would raid and torch the town, and his barbershop would be one of the structures consumed in that conflagration.</p>						
etc.						

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JOHN AND MARY ANN DAY BROWN



JOHN BROWN

MARY ANN DAY BROWN

“Perish with him the folly / That seeks through evil, good.”¹



<u>Abolitionism's Martyrs</u>
<u>Elijah Lovejoy</u>
Charles Torrey
Seth Concklin
Alanson Week
Aaron Burr
George Thompson
Calvin Fairbanks
Delia Ann Webster
Asa Mahon
Daniel Drayton
Jonathan Walker
<u>John Brown</u>

1. John Greenleaf Whittier.



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John Brown was born in Torrington, Connecticut on May 9, 1800. In 1820 he married Dianthe Lusk, who died in 1832, during childbirth. Their marriage produced 7 children: John Jr. (born July 25, 1821); [Jason Brown](#) (born January 19, 1823); Owen (born November 4, 1824); [Frederick Brown](#) (1) (born January 9, 1827, died March 31, 1831); Ruth (born February 18, 1829); [Frederick Brown](#) (2) (born December 21, 1830, died August 20, 1856 at Osawatomie, Kansas).



In 1833, John Brown married teenager Mary Ann Day, of Meadville PA, who bore a total of thirteen children, although only six lived to adulthood. All together, of John Brown's twenty children, only half survived their childhoods, and two more were killed during the raid on Harper's Ferry. John and Mary Ann's children were: Watson (born ?); [Salmon Brown](#) (born October 2, 1836); Sarah (1) (born 1834, died 1843); Charles (born 1837, died 1843); Oliver (born ?); Peter (born 1840, died 1843); Austin (born 1842, died 1843); [Anne Brown](#) (born December 23, 1843); Sarah (born September 11, 1846); Ellen I (born ? died 1848) Ellen II (born September 25, 1854); Amelia (born ?). The entire Brown family was involved in abolitionist work, and Brown's surviving sons were among his most trusted lieutenants. Son Frederick died during the Osawatomie raid in 1856. [Jason Brown](#) and [Salmon Brown](#) did not take part in the assault on Harper's Ferry; the rest of the family did. The raiding sons were John Brown, Jr., Oliver Brown, Owen Brown, and Watson Brown. Annie Brown stayed at the Kennedy Farm with Martha, Oliver's wife, their task being to provide a "cover" for the men as well as care for them by cooking and cleaning. The Brown family was closely related to the Thompson family. Daughter Ruth married Henry Thompson, whose brothers William Thompson and Dauphin Thompson took part in the raid. Furthermore, their sister Isabel Thompson was married to Watson Brown, cementing



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familial alliances.

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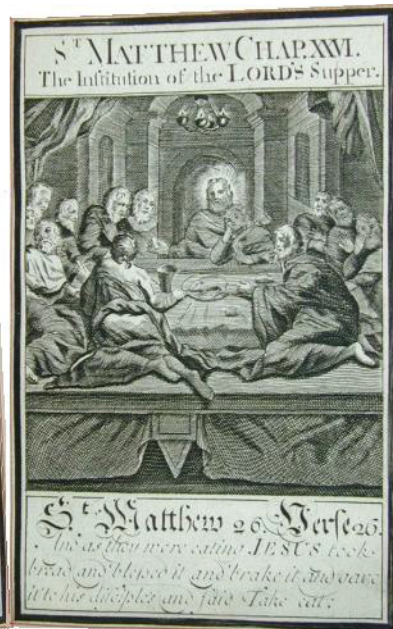
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RACE WAR,

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1549

Introduction of uniform Protestant service in England based on King Edward VI's BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER — marking the beginning of Protestantism within the Anglican Church.²





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2. The edition illustrated is THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS, AND OTHER RITES AND CEREMONIES OF THE CHURCH, ACCORDING TO THE USE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND: TOGETHER WITH THE PSALTER OR PSALMS OF DAVID, PRINTED AS THEY ARE TO BE SUNG, OR SAID, IN CHURCHES, that would be printed by John Baskett, printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, for the University of Oxford in 1716. There is a phrase "noble army of Martyrs" in the BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER that may explain [Henry Thoreau](#)'s remark about becoming willing to kill, or to die, to end enslavement. The phrase may have come into the BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER from the *TE DEUM*, quite a bit older.

JOHN BROWN



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1650

Governor [William Bradford](#) recorded in OF PLYMOUTH PLANTATION that Peter Brown, a carpenter who had been unmarried when he had come on the *Mayflower* in 1620 and drawn his house lot in [Plymouth](#) with the rest, soon afterward had accompanied Bradford, Standish, and Winslow to the neighboring settlement of Duxbury. He had died during 1633 and Standish and Brewster had taken his inventory on October 10, 1633. This Peter Brown had married twice and had two children by each wife, and as of this writing by Governor Bradford, both of those by the 1st wife had been married and one of them had given him two grandchildren. Although, for his 1st wife, conjecture assigns him the widow Ford who had come in the *Fortune* during 1621, such a 1st marriage must have occurred after the land division in 1624 and, at the division of cattle during 1627, he has associated with him Martha Brown and Mary Brown, who were perhaps his wife and his daughter. He is the ancestor of Captain [John Brown](#) of Harpers Ferry in that one of his descendants in the main line would be the Captain John Brown of the Connecticut militia who would die of disease in the revolutionary service in 1776. This revolutionary captain would marry Hannah Owen, of Welsh origin; and their son Owen Brown would marry Ruth Mills, of Dutch origin. Owen Brown would leave a brief autobiographical writing beginning with "My life has been of little worth, mostly filled up with vanity" and including the information that "In 1800, May 9, John was born, one hundred years after his great-grandfather; nothing else very uncommon." This John born on May 9, 1800 was of course the John Brown of Harpers Ferry. Although the writing states "We lived in peace with all mankind, so far as I know," this Owen Brown was one of that early school of abolitionists whom Hopkins and Edwards enlightened and in 1798, soon after Connecticut abolished slavery, he apparently participated in the forcible rescue of some slaves who were being claimed there by a Virginia clergyman.



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1676

At this point Dutch traders were purchasing 15,000 black Africans per year on the coast of Angola, at approximately 30 florins each, and selling them in the Americas at some 300 to 500 florins each. “[We must defend ourselves] against all Indians in general, for that they were all Enemies.” This was the unequivocal view of Nathaniel Bacon, a young, wealthy Englishman who had recently settled in the Virginia backcountry. The opinion that all Indians were enemies was also shared by a many other Virginians, especially those who lived like Bacon in the interior. It was not the view, however, of the governor of the colony, William Berkeley. Berkeley was not opposed to fighting Indians who were considered enemies, but attacking friendly Indians, he thought, could lead to what everyone wanted to avoid: a war with “all the Indians against us.” Berkeley also didn’t trust Bacon’s intentions, believing that the upstart’s true aim was to stir up trouble among settlers, who were already discontent with the colony’s government because of the heavy taxes he was levying on [tobacco](#). Bacon attracted a large following who, like him, wanted to kill or drive out every Indian in Virginia. The main fighting force of these rebels was made up of white and black bond laborers who were seeking an end to their servitude. At a place at the head of the York River in Virginia which had been named “West Point” after its owner, a Colonel West, some “four hundred English and Negroes in Armes” were demanding “freedom from their [slavery](#).”³

In 1675, when Berkeley had denied Bacon a commission to lead soldiers, Bacon had taken it upon himself to lead his followers in a crusade against the “enemy.” They had marched to a fort held by a friendly tribe, the Occaneechees, and convinced them to capture warriors from an unfriendly tribe. When the Occaneechees had returned with captives, Bacon’s men had first killed the captives and then turned on their native “allies” and opened fire. Considerable booty was then collected, in the form of furs. All the Indians about the Chesapeake Bay were made tributary to the whites as the result of a campaign against them by Bacon, who defeated and nearly exterminated them in a battle fought on the present site of the city of Richmond. Berkeley declared Bacon a rebel and charged him with treason. Just to be safe, the next time Bacon returned to Jamestown VA, he had brought along 50 armed men. He had been arrested, but Berkeley had pardoned him instead of

3. Edmund S. Morgan has asserted that the Southrons would be seeking to prevent a replay of Bacon’s Rebellion by “racism, to separate dangerous free whites from dangerous slave blacks by a screen of racial contempt,” in accordance with Sir Francis Bacon’s advice, that the wise ruler divides and breaks off “all factions and combinations that are adverse to the state, and setting them at a distance, or at least distrust among themselves.”

What this strategy would of course not contemplate would be that circumstances might be brought to occur, in which the black slaves could be divided away from the protection of their rich white owners, and then slaughtered by the poor whites in a spasm of genocide, bringing about the destruction not only of the black slaves which these poor whites had been trained so to contemn, but also their rich white owners who could not survive as such if divested of their investment in their chattel servants. — Which is **very much what almost would be brought about** in consequence of Captain [John Brown](#)’s ill-advised 1859 attempt to equip an army of escaping slaves with pikes at [Harpers Ferry](#)!



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sentencing him to death, the usual punishment for such treason. Still without the commission he felt he deserved, Bacon had returned to Jamestown later the same month, this time accompanied by 500 men. Berkeley had been forced to give Bacon the commission, only to later declare that it was void. Bacon, in the meantime, had continued his fight against Indians. When he learned of the Governor's declaration, he headed back to Jamestown. The governor immediately fled, along with a few of his supporters, to Virginia's eastern shore. Each leader tried to muster support. Each promised freedom to slaves and servants who would join their cause. Bacon's following was much greater than William Berkeley's and in September, he and his men would be able to set Jamestown on fire. Britain sent a royal force to assist in quelling the uprising and arresting scores of committed rebels, white and black. When Nathaniel Bacon suddenly died in October, probably of dysentery, his rebellion fizzled out. Theodore W. Allen has commented on this history that:

[J]ust as the overthrow of the tenancy in the 1620s had cleared the way for the institution of chattel bond-servitude, so the defeat of Bacon's Rebellion cleared the way for the establishment of the system of lifelong hereditary chattel bond-servitude.

July 30, Sunday (Old Style): On the Virginia coast, the main force of the rebels under a farmer general consisted of some "four hundred English and Negroes in Armes" demanding "freedom from their [slavery](#)." Here is this day's "Declaration of Nathaniel Bacon in the Name of the People of Virginia":⁴

For having, upon specious pretenses of public works, raised great unjust taxes upon the commonalty for the advancement of private favorites and other sinister ends, but no visible effects in any measure adequate; for not having, during this long time of his government, in any measure advanced this hopeful colony either by fortifications, towns, or trade.

For having abused and rendered contemptible the magistrates of justice by advancing to places of judicature scandalous and ignorant favorites.

For having wronged his Majesty's prerogative and interest by assuming monopoly of the beaver trade and for having in it unjust gain betrayed and sold his Majesty's country and the lives of his loyal subjects to the barbarous heathen.

For having protected, favored, and emboldened the Indians against his Majesty's loyal subjects, never contriving, requiring, or appointing any due or proper means of satisfaction for their many invasions, robberies, and murders committed upon us.

4. Per FOUNDATIONS OF COLONIAL AMERICA: A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY, SOUTHERN COLONIES, ed. Keith Kavenagh (NY: Chelsea House, 1973, pages 1783-4).

Edmund S. Morgan has asserted that the Southrons would be seeking to prevent a replay of Bacon's Rebellion by "racism, to separate dangerous free whites from dangerous slave blacks by a screen of racial contempt," in accordance with Sir Francis Bacon's advice, that the wise ruler divides and breaks off "all factions and combinations that are adverse to the state, and setting them at a distance, or at least distrust among themselves."

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Which is **very much what almost would be brought about** in consequence of Captain [John Brown](#)'s 1859 attempt to equip an army of escaping slaves with pikes at [Harpers Ferry](#).



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For having, when the army of English was just upon the track of those Indians, who now in all places burn, spoil, murder and when we might with ease have destroyed them who then were in open hostility, for then having expressly countermanded and sent back our army by passing his word for the peaceable demeanor of the said Indians, who immediately prosecuted their evil intentions, committing horrid murders and robberies in all places, being protected by the said engagement and word past of him the said Sir William Berkeley, having ruined and laid desolate a great part of his Majesty's country, and have now drawn themselves into such obscure and remote places and are by their success so emboldened and confirmed by their confederacy so strengthened that the cries of blood are in all places, and the terror and consternation of the people so great, are now become not only difficult but a very formidable enemy who might at first with ease have been destroyed.

And lately, when, upon the loud outcries of blood, the assembly had, with all care, raised and framed an army for the preventing of further mischief and safeguard of this his Majesty's colony.

For having, with only the privacy of some few favorites without acquainting the people, only by the alteration of a figure, forged a commission, by we know not what hand, not only without but even against the consent of the people, for the raising and effecting civil war and destruction, which being happily and without bloodshed prevented; for having the second time attempted the same, thereby calling down our forces from the defense of the frontiers and most weakly exposed places.

For the prevention of civil mischief and ruin amongst ourselves while the barbarous enemy in all places did invade, murder, and spoil us, his Majesty's most faithful subjects.

Of this and the aforesaid articles we accuse Sir William Berkeley as guilty of each and every one of the same, and as one who has traitorously attempted, violated, and injured his Majesty's interest here by a loss of a great part of this his colony and many of his faithful loyal subjects by him betrayed and in a barbarous and shameful manner exposed to the incursions and murder of the heathen. And we do further declare these the ensuing persons in this list to have been his wicked and pernicious councilors, confederates, aiders, and assisters against the commonalty in these our civil commotions.

Sir Henry Chichley	Richard Whitacre
Lt. Col. Christopher Wormeley	Nicholas Spencer
Phillip Ludwell	Joseph Bridger
Robt. Beverley	William Claiburne, Jr.
Ri. Lee	Thomas Hawkins
Thomas Ballard	William Sherwood
William Cole	John Page Clerke
John West	John Clauffe Clerk
Hubert Farrell	Thomas Reade
Math. Kempe	



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And we do further demand that the said Sir William Berkeley with all the persons in this list be forthwith delivered up or surrender themselves within four days after the notice hereof, or otherwise we declare as follows.

That in whatsoever place, house, or ship, any of the said persons shall reside, be hid, or protected, we declare the owners, masters, or inhabitants of the said places to be confederates and traitors to the people and the estates of them is also of all the aforesaid persons to be confiscated. And this we, the commons of Virginia, do declare, desiring a firm union amongst ourselves that we may jointly and with one accord defend ourselves against the common enemy. And let not the faults of the guilty be the reproach of the innocent, or the faults or crimes of the oppressors divide and separate us who have suffered by their oppressions.

These are, therefore, in his Majesty's name, to command you forthwith to seize the persons abovementioned as traitors to the King and country and them to bring to Middle Plantation and there to secure them until further order, and, in case of opposition, if you want any further assistance you are forthwith to demand it in the name of the people in all the counties of Virginia.


Nathaniel Bacon
General by Consent of the people.
William Sherwood



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1704

 Robert Beverley, in *HISTORY AND PRESENT STATE OF VIRGINIA*, published his memories of Nathaniel Bacon's 1676 test of self-government in Virginia. Beverley had sided with Governor Berkeley during this dispute and, although his later recounting of events was not wholly dispassionate, in it he demonstrated himself to be at the very least a shrewd and thoughtful observer.

[CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE](#)

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KING PHILIP.



Published by S.G. Drake, Boston.



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all other taxes, which was an excessive burden. They likewise laid ameracements of seventy, fifty, or thirty pounds of [tobacco](#), as the cause was on every law case tried throughout the country. Besides all this, they applied the balance, remaining due upon account Of the two shilling per hogshead, and fort duties, to this use. Which taxes and ameracements fell heaviest on the poor people, the effect of whose labor would not clothe their wives and children. This made them desperately uneasy, especially when, after a whole year's patience under all these pressures, they had no encouragement from their agents in England, to hope for remedy; nor any certainty when they should be eased of those heavy impositions.

Thirdly, Upon the back of all these misfortunes came out the act of 25 Car. II. for better securing the plantation trade. By this act several duties were laid on the trade from one plantation to another. This was a new hardship, and the rather, because the revenue arising by this act was not applied to the use of the plantations wherein it was raised: but given clear away; nay, in that country it seemed to be of no other use, but to burden the trade, or create a good income to the officers; for the collector had half, the comptroller a quarter, and the remaining quarter was subdivided into salaries; till it was lost.

By the same act also very great duties were laid on the fisheries of the plantations, if manufactured by the English inhabitants there; while the people of England were absolutely free from all customs. Nay, though the oil, blubber and whale bone, which were made by the inhabitants of the plantations, were carried to England by Englishmen, and in English built ships, yet it was held to a considerable duty, more than the inhabitants of England paid.

These were the afflictions that country labored under when the fourth accident happened, viz., the disturbance offered by the Indians to the frontiers....

This addition of mischief to minds already full of discontent, made people ready to vent all their resentment against the poor Indians. There was nothing to be got by [tobacco](#); neither could they turn any other manufacture to advantage; so that most of the poorer sort were willing to quit their unprofitable employments, and go volunteers against the Indians.

At first they flocked together tumultuously, running in troops from one plantation to another without a head, till at last the seditious humor of Colonel Nathaniel Bacon led him to be of the party. This gentleman had been brought up at one of the Inns of court in England, and had a moderate fortune. He was young, bold, active, of an inviting aspect, and powerful elocution. In a word, he was every way qualified to head a giddy and unthinking multitude. Before he had been three years in the country, he was, for his extraordinary qualifications, made one of the council, and in great honor and esteem among the people. For this reason he no sooner gave countenance to this riotous mob, but they all presently fixed their eyes upon him for their general, and accordingly made their addresses to him. As soon as he found this, he harangued them publicly. He aggravated the Indian mischiefs, complaining that they were occasioned for want of a due regulation of their trade. He recounted particularly the other grievances and pressures they lay under, and pretended that he accepted of their command with no other intention but to do them and the country service, in which he was willing to encounter the greatest difficulties and dangers. He farther assured them he would never lay down his arms till he had revenged their sufferings upon the Indians, and redressed all their other grievances.



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By these insinuations he wrought his men into so perfect an unanimity, that they were one and all at his devotion. He took care to exasperate them to the utmost, by representing all their misfortunes. After he had begun to muster them, he dispatched a messenger to the governor, by whom he aggravated the mischiefs done by the Indians, and desired a commission of general to go out against them. This gentleman was in so great esteem at that time with the council, that the governor did not think fit to give him a flat refusal; but sent him word he would consult the council, and return him a farther answer.

In the mean time Bacon was expeditious in his preparations, and having all things in readiness, began his march, depending on the authority the people had given him. He would not lose so much time as to stay for his commission; but dispatched several messengers to the governor to hasten it. On the other hand, the governor, instead of a commission, sent positive orders to him to disperse his men and come down in person to him, upon pain of being declared a rebel.

This unexpected order was a great surprise to Bacon, and not a little trouble to his men. However, he was resolved to prosecute his first intentions, depending upon his strength and interest with the people. Nevertheless, he intended to bait upon the governor, but not altogether defenceless. Pursuant to this resolution, he took about forty of his men down with him in a sloop to Jamestown VA, where the governor was with his council.

Matters did not succeed there to Mr. Bacon's satisfaction, wherefore he expressed himself a little too freely. For which, being suspended from the council, he went away again in a huff with his sloop and followers. The governor filled a long boat with men, and pursued the sloop so close, that Colonel Bacon moved into his boat to make more haste. But the governor had sent up by land to the ships at Sandy Point, where he was stopped and sent down again. Upon his return he was kindly received by the governor, who, knowing he had gone a step beyond his instructions in having suspended him, was glad to admit him again of the council; after which he hoped all things might be pacified.

Notwithstanding this, Colonel Bacon still insisted upon a commission to be general of the volunteers, and to go out against the Indians; from which the governor endeavored to dissuade him, but to no purpose, because he had some secret project in view. He had the luck to be countenanced in his importunities, by the news of fresh murder and robberies committed by the Indians. However, not being able to accomplish his ends by fair means, he stole privately out of town; and having put himself at the head of six hundred volunteers, marched directly to Jamestown, where the assembly was then sitting. He presented himself before the assembly, and drew up his men in battalia before the house wherein they sat. He urged to them his preparations; and alledged that if the commission had not been delayed so long, the war against the Indians might have been finished.

The governor resented this insolent usage worst of all, and now obstinately refused to grant him anything, offering his naked breast against the presented arms of his followers. But the assembly, fearing the fatal consequences of provoking a discontented multitude ready armed, who had the governor, council and assembly entirely in their power, addressed the governor to grant Bacon his request. They prepared themselves the commission, constituting him general of the forces of Virginia, and brought it to the governor to be signed.



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The occasion of this rebellion is not easy to be discovered: but 'tis certain there were many things that concurred towards it. For it cannot be imagined, that upon the instigation of two or three traders only, who aimed at a monopoly of the Indian trade, as some pretend to say, the whole country would have fallen into so much distraction; in which people did not only hazard their necks by rebellion, but endeavored to ruin a governor, whom they all entirely loved, and had unanimously chosen; a gentleman who had devoted his whole life and estate to the service of the country, and against whom in thirty-five years experience there had never been one single complaint. Neither can it be supposed, that upon so slight grounds, they would make choice of a leader they hardly knew, to oppose a gentleman that had been so long and so deservedly the darling of the people. So that in all probability there was something else in the wind, without which the body of the country had never been engaged in that insurrection.

Four things may be reckoned to have been the main ingredients towards this intestine commotion, viz., First, The extreme low price of tobacco, and the ill usage of the planters in the exchange of goods for it, which the country, with all their earnest endeavors, could not remedy. Secondly, The splitting the colony into proprietaries, contrary to the original charters; and the extravagant taxes they were forced to undergo, to relieve themselves from those grants. Thirdly, The heavy restraints and burdens laid upon their trade by act of Parliament in England. Fourthly, The disturbance given by the Indians. Of all which in their order.

First, Of the low price of tobacco, and the disappointment of all sort of remedy, I have spoken sufficiently before. Secondly, Of splitting the country into proprietaries.

King Charles the Second, to gratify some nobles about him, made two great grants out of that country. These grants were not of the uncultivated wood land only, but also of plantations, which for many years had been seated and improved, under the encouragement of several charters granted by his royal ancestors to that colony. Those grants were distinguished by the names of the Northern and Southern grants of Virginia, and the same men were concerned in both. They were kept dormant some years after they were made, and in the year 1674 begun to be put in execution. As soon as ever the country came to know this, they remonstrated against them; and the assembly drew up an humble address to his majesty, complaining of the said grants, as derogatory to the previous charters and privileges granted to that colony, by his majesty and his royal progenitors. They sent to England Mr. Secretary Ludwell and Colonel Park, as their agents to address the king, to vacate those grants. And the better to defray that charge, they laid a tax of fifty pounds of tobacco per poll, for two years together, over and above



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With much reluctancy the governor signed it, and thereby put the power of war and peace into Bacon's hands. Upon this he marched away immediately, having gained his end, which was in effect a power to secure a monopoly of the Indian trade to himself and his friends.

As soon as General Bacon had marched to such a convenient distance from Jamestown VA that the assembly thought they might deliberate with safety, the governor, by their advice, issued a proclamation of rebellion against him, commanding his followers to surrender him, and forthwith disperse themselves, giving orders at the same time for raising the militia of the country against him.

The people being much exasperated, and General Bacon by his address and eloquence having gained an absolute dominion over their hearts, they unanimously resolved that not a hair of his head should be touched, much less that they should surrender him as a rebel. Therefore they kept to their arms, and instead of proceeding against the Indians they marched back to Jamestown, directing their fury against such of their friends and countrymen as should dare to oppose them....

By this time the governor had got together a small party to side with him. These he furnished with sloops, arms and ammunition, under command of Major Robert Beverley, in order to cross the bay and oppose the malcontents. By this means there happened some skirmishes, in which several were killed, and others taken prisoners. Thus they were going on by a civil war to destroy one another, and lay waste their infant country, when it pleased God, after some months' confusion, to put an end to their misfortunes, as well as to Bacon's designs, by his natural death. He died at Dr. Green's in Gloucester county. But where he was buried was never yet discovered, though afterward there was great inquiry made, with design expose his bones to public infamy.

In the meanwhile those disorders occasioned a general neglect of husbandry, and a great destruction of the stocks Of cattle, so that people had a dreadful prospect want and famine. But the malcontents being thus disunited by the loss of their general, in whom they all confided, they began to squabble among themselves, and every man's business was, how to make the best terms he could for himself.

Lieutenant General Ingram (whose true name was Johnson) and Major General Walklate, surrendered, condition of pardon for themselves and their followers though they were both forced to submit to an incapacity of bearing office in that country for the future.

Peace being thus restored, Sir William Berkeley returned to his former seat of government, and every man to his several habitation....

When this storm, occasioned by Bacon, was blown over, and all things quiet again, Sir William Berkeley called an assembly, for settling the affairs of the country, and for making reparation to such as had been oppressed After which a regiment of soldiers arrived from England, which were sent to suppress the insurrection; but they, coming after the business was over, had no occasion to exercise their courage....

With the regiment above mentioned arrived commissioners, to enquire into the occasion and authors of this rebellion; and Sir William Berkeley came to England: where from the time of his arrival, his sickness obliged him to keep his chamber till he died; so that he had no opportunity of kissing the king's hand. But his majesty declared himself well satisfied with his conduct in Virginia, and was very kind to him during his sickness, often enquiring after his health, and commanding him not to hazard it by too early an endeavor to come to court.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Edmund S. Morgan has asserted that the Southrons had sought to prevent a replay of Bacon's Rebellion by "racism, to separate dangerous free whites from dangerous slave blacks by a screen of racial contempt," in accordance with Sir [Francis Bacon](#)'s advice, that the wise ruler divides and breaks off "all factions and combinations that are adverse to the state, and setting them at a distance, or at least distrust among themselves."

RACE

Theodore W. Allen has commented on this strategy that:

[J]ust as the overthrow of the tenancy in the 1620s had cleared the way for the institution of chattel bond-servitude, so the defeat of Bacon's Rebellion cleared the way for the establishment of the system of lifelong hereditary chattel bond-servitude.

What this Southron strategy did not contemplate was that circumstances might be brought to occur, in which the Southern black slaves could be divided away from the protection of their rich white owners, and then slaughtered by the Southern poor whites in a spasm of genocide, bringing about the destruction not only of the black slaves which these poor whites had been trained so to contemn, but also their Southron rich white owners who could not survive as such if divested of their investment in their chattel servants. —Which is **very much what almost would be brought about** in consequence of Captain [John Brown](#)'s 1859 attempt to equip an army of escaping slaves with pikes at [Harpers Ferry](#)!


SLAVERY



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1800

 May 9, Friday: [John Brown](#) was born in Torrington, Connecticut.

Governor William Bradford had recorded, in 1650 in his OF PLYMOUTH PLANTATION, that Peter Brown, a carpenter who had been unmarried when he had come on the *Mayflower* in 1620 and drawn his house lot in Plymouth with the rest, had soon afterward had accompanied Bradford, Standish, and Winslow to the neighboring settlement of Duxbury. This remote ancestor of Captain [John Brown](#) of Harpers Ferry had died during 1633 and Standish and Brewster had taken his inventory on October 10, 1633. He had married twice and had two children by each wife, and as of this writing by Governor Bradford, both of those by the 1st wife had been married and one of them had given him two grandchildren. Although, for his 1st wife, conjecture assigns him the widow Ford who had come in the *Fortune* during 1621, such a 1st marriage must have occurred after the land division in 1624 and, at the division of cattle during 1627, he has associated with him Martha Brown and Mary Brown, who were perhaps his wife and his daughter. One of his descendants in the main line would be the Captain John Brown of the Connecticut militia who died of disease in the revolutionary service in 1776. This revolutionary captain married with Hannah Owen, of Welsh origin; and their son Owen Brown married with Ruth Mills, of Dutch origin. Owen Brown, John Brown's father, would leave a brief autobiographical writing beginning with "My life has been of little worth, mostly filled up with vanity" and including the information that "In 1800, May 9, John was born, one hundred years after his great-grandfather; nothing else very uncommon." Although the writing states "We lived in peace with all mankind, so far as I know," this father was one of that early school of abolitionists whom the Reverends Samuel Hopkins and [Jonathan Edwards](#) enlightened. His father, a strict Calvinist, hated slavery and believed that holding humans in chattel servitude was a sin against God. In 1798, soon after Connecticut abolished slavery, he apparently had participated in the forcible rescue of some slaves who were being claimed there by a Virginia clergyman.

[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) would record an autobiographical fragment written by John Brown in 1859 about how, at the age of 4, little John had stolen 3 brass pins, and at the age of 5 had removed with his parents to [Ohio](#) where he had been able to meet real Indians. He claimed that although he had never been "quarrelsome," he had become "exceedingly fond of the harshest and roughest kind of plays; and could never get enough." When for a short period he was able to go to school, what he liked was not the confinement of study but the opportunity it offered him to wrestle and snowball and run and jump with other boys, and knock off old seedy wool hats. By the age of twelve he was being sent a hundred miles into the wilderness with cattle. He had been disgusted with what he heard of the [War of 1812](#), and for many years refused militia duty and paid instead the fine. He made himself familiar with every portion of the BIBLE. He never danced, and never knew one card from another. Staying in a house where there was a slave almost his own age, and seeing this boy so ill-treated and even beaten, with an iron fire shovel, made him into "a most determined abolitionist" and led him "to declare, or swear, eternal war with slavery." From age fifteen to twenty he worked as a farmer and currier, chiefly for his father, and for most of the time as foreman. For awhile he surveyed, and then he became a shepherd. He got married with a widow, "a remarkably plain, but neat, industrious, and economical girl, of excellent character, earnest piety, and good practical common sense," Dianthe Lusk, and they had seven children. Shortly after she died he married again, with Mary Anne Day, with whom he would create another thirteen children. Among the twenty children of John Brown's two marriages, eight would die in early childhood.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1804




[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) would record that in an autobiographical fragment written by [John Brown](#) in 1859, John had related how he had, at the age of 4 in about this year, stolen 3 brass pins.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1805


 [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) would record an autobiographical fragment written by Captain [John Brown](#) in 1859 in which John had related how, at the age of five, he had removed with his parents to Ohio where he had been able to meet real Indians. He claimed that although he had never been “quarrelsome,” he had become “exceedingly fond of the harshest and roughest kind of plays; and could never get enough.” When for a short period he was able to go to school, what he liked was not the confinement of study but the opportunity it offered him to wrestle and snowball and run and jump with other boys, and knock off old seedy wool hats.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1812

 [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) would record an autobiographical fragment written by [John Brown](#) in 1859 about how, in about this year at the age of 12, he had traveled through the Michigan wilderness to deliver a herd of cattle. He had been disgusted with what he heard of the [War of 1812](#), and for many years refused militia duty and paid instead the fine. He made himself familiar with every portion of the BIBLE. He never danced, and never knew one card from another. He lodged with a man who owned a boy [slave](#). Brown was treated well, but the slave was beaten before his eyes with a metal fire shovel, and seeing this boy so ill-treated made him into “a most determined abolitionist” and led him “to declare, or swear, eternal war with slavery.”

An incident of his boyhood may explain, in some measure, the intense abhorrence he felt to slavery. He had for some reason been sent into the States of [Kentucky](#), where he made the acquaintance of a slave boy, about his own age, of whom he became very fond. For some petty offense this boy was one day subjected to a brutal beating. The blows were dealt with an iron shovel and fell fast and furiously upon his slender body. Born in a free State and unaccustomed to such revolted at the shocking spectacle and at that early age he swore eternal hatred to slavery. After years never obliterated the impression, and he found in this early experience an argument against contempt for small things. It is true that the boy is the father of the man. From the acorn comes the oak. The impression of a horse's foot in the sand suggested the art of printing. The fall of an apple intimated the law of gravitation. A word dropped in the woods of Vincennes, by royal hunters, gave Europe and the world a “William the Silent,” and a thirty years' war. The beating of a Hebrew bondsman, by an Egyptian, created a Moses, and the infliction of a similar outrage on a helpless slave boy in our own land may have caused, forty years afterwards, a John Brown and [Harpers Ferry](#) Raid.

THE FALLACY OF MOMENTISM: THIS STARRY UNIVERSE DOES NOT CONSIST OF A SEQUENCE OF MOMENTS. THAT IS A FIGMENT, ONE WE HAVE RECOURSE TO IN ORDER TO PRIVILEGE TIME OVER CHANGE, A PRIVILEGING THAT MAKES CHANGE SEEM UNREAL, DERIVATIVE, A MERE APPEARANCE. IN FACT IT IS CHANGE AND ONLY CHANGE WHICH WE EXPERIENCE AS REALITY, TIME BEING BY WAY OF RADICAL CONTRAST UNEXPERIENCED — A MERE INTELLECTUAL CONSTRUCT. THERE EXISTS NO SUCH THING AS A MOMENT. NO “INSTANT” HAS



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR


EVER FOR AN INSTANT EXISTED.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1815

 [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) would record an autobiographical fragment written by [John Brown](#) in 1859 about how, from age 15 (in this year) to age 20 he worked as a farmer and currier, chiefly for his father, and for most of the time as foreman. For awhile he surveyed, and then he became a shepherd. He got married with a widow, “a remarkably plain, but neat, industrious, and economical girl, of excellent character, earnest piety, and good practical common sense,” Dianthe Lusk, and they would have 7 children. (Among the 20 children of John Brown’s 2 marriages, 8 died in early childhood.)

[John Buchanan Floyd](#) was being educated in Virginia by his gifted parents.

[George DeBaptiste](#) was born to free black parents in Fredericksburg, Virginia. He would be apprenticed to a barber in Richmond, Virginia and subsequently would secure employment as a manservant to a wealthy Southerner. He would become the personal valet of General William Henry Harrison and, when Harrison became President of the United States, would be appointed as a steward in the White House. After Harrison’s death DeBaptiste and his wife would return to their former home in Madison, Indiana. When riots would break out in Indiana against free blacks, the DeBaptiste family would in 1846 relocate to Detroit, Michigan and purchase an interest in a barber shop, start his own catering business, and purchase real estate.

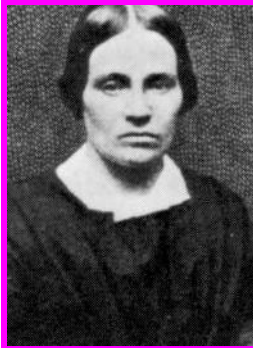


RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1816

 April 15, Monday: Mary Ann Day was born in Whitehall, [New York](#).




MARY ANN DAY BROWN



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1818

 May: At about this point, Thoreau would report in “A Plea for Captain John Brown,” [John Brown](#) “though he was tempted by the offer of some petty office in the army, when he was eighteen, he not only declined that, but he also refused to train when warned, and was fined for it.” For this account by Thoreau we have so far failed to find any outside corroboration. If Brown had told Thoreau this privately about his past during one of their conversations in Concord, can we be sure that the man had been telling Thoreau the truth — when in other accounts he made of his early life, to other people, he neglected to mention these particular details, and when we know that on occasion he was guilty of creating stories for their effect on his audience?


There is also an allegation on the record, that at one point [John Brown](#) was studying for the Congregational ministry in Connecticut, but changed his mind and returned to work with his father in Hudson, Ohio. —One wonders how that might be dated more precisely.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1820

 June 21, Wednesday: [John Brown](#) got married with the widowed Dianthe Lusk. In 1826 they would leave for the wilderness in Pennsylvania, where Brown would build a tannery. Dianthe Lusk Brown would bear 5 surviving children and then die in 1832 shortly after the death of a newborn. Shortly after his 1st wife died, John Brown would marry again, with teenage Mary Anne Day, with whom he would create another 13 children (among the 20 children of John Brown's 2 marriages, 8 would die in early childhood).



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1821

→ July 25, Wednesday: [John Brown, Jr.](#) was born in Hudson, Ohio, the 1st child of [John Brown](#) and [Diantha Lusk Brown](#).

→ October 24, Wednesday: According to an article in the [Caledonian Mercury](#) of Edinburgh, Scotland for December 6th, on October 24th the army of the United Kingdom had placed a number of its officers on half-pay. Among those were the officers of the 37th Regiment of Foot: "Captain J. Thoreau; Lieutenant C. Vincent; Ensign Hon. A.C.J. Brown."

[CAPTAIN JOHN THOREAU](#)

[Thomas Jefferson](#)'s proposal for a revision of the laws of Virginia was approved. This self-described "author of the [Declaration of Independence](#)" had an understanding of race "treason" that would create a "treason" law of aiding and abetting a [servile insurrection](#), which after several revisions would become the deadly Virginia "treason" statute under which Captain [John Brown](#) would be hanged:

On the subject of the Criminal law, all were agreed that the punishment of death should be abolished, except for treason and murder; and that, for other felonies should be substituted hard labor in the public works, and in some cases, the Lex talionis. How this last revolting principle came to obtain our approbation, I do not remember. There remained indeed in our laws a vestige of it in a single case of a slave. it was the English law in the time of the Anglo-Saxons, copied probably from the Hebrew law of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," and it was the law of several antient people. But the modern mind had left it far in the rear of its advances.






RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1823

 January 19, Sunday: [Jason Brown](#) was born in Hudson, Ohio, the 2d child of [John Brown](#) and [Dianthe Lusk Brown](#).

In [Providence, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

1st day attended Meeting in [Providence](#), the first time I ever attended that Meeting except at Quarterly Meeting times -In the forenoon D B preached & in the Afternoon Silent - we dined at J Congdons In the Afternoon we went to Wm Almys & lodged

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1824

➡ November 4, Thursday: [Owen Brown](#), 3d of [John Brown](#)'s and [Dianthe Lusk Brown](#)'s sons and his stalwart aid both in [Kansas](#) and at [Harpers Ferry](#), was born at Hudson, Ohio. With a withered arm, he would attempt to make a career of writing humor articles for newspapers, and would be 35 years of age at the time that he would escape from the aftermath of the raid. He would complete his life as a grower of grapes in Ohio, and on a mountain near Pasadena, [California](#).



On the following screen is what [Harpers Ferry](#) looked like in this year:



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR



Leocadie, a drame lyrique by Daniel-Francois-Esprit Auber to words of Scribe and Melesville after Cervantes, was performed for the initial time, in Theatre Feydeau, Paris.

In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

*5th day 4th of 11th M 1824 / This is our Quarterly Meeting day
at Somerset - my mind was much there while sitting in our
Meeting today which was small - our fr Job Chaloner was there &
spake a little to satisfaction -*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

[John Augustus Stone](#)'s play "Restoration; or, The Diamond Cross" was staged at the Chatham Garden Theater in [New-York](#). During this year the author himself was making appearances in supporting roles at this theater, as usual heavily made up as an old man.


**NEVER READ AHEAD! TO APPRECIATE NOVEMBER 4TH, 1824 AT ALL
ONE MUST APPRECIATE IT AS A TODAY (THE FOLLOWING DAY,
TOMORROW, IS BUT A PORTION OF THE UNREALIZED FUTURE AND IFFY
AT BEST).**



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1826

 [Pietro Bachi](#) found work in the United States as a teacher of Italian and Spanish at [Harvard College](#), at a salary of \$500 per year.

[Benjamin Peirce, Senior](#) became [Harvard](#)'s librarian.

[Doctor John White Webster](#) compiled A MANUAL OF CHEMISTRY.

[Richard Hildreth](#) graduated from [Harvard](#) and would teach school for a year, at the [Concord Academy](#) in [Concord](#), Massachusetts, before deciding to follow the example of Sir Walter Scott and pursue a career in law and literature.

In about this year [John Buchanan Floyd](#) graduated from South Carolina College.

In about this year Nathaniel Baker arrived at the age of 80 and sold his portion of the Baker farm to Amos Baker's son [James Baker](#).

[Elizur Wright, Junior](#) graduated at [Yale College](#) and went to teach in a school at Groton.

In upstate [New York](#), Geneva College (Hobart and William Smith Colleges) held its initial Commencement exercise, graduating five.

[John Brown](#)'s father [Owen Brown](#) was a farmer and tanner for whom locution was always problematic due to a stutter (unless, of course, he was raising his voice in prayer). When Western Reserve College was established at Hudson, Ohio during this year (it has since become Western Reserve University in Cleveland), Owen was one of its founders and one of its initial trustees. An antislavery Christian he was one of the early Western Reserve abolitionists and for the 1st few years the conduct of the institution would accord with his own point of view. Faculty changes, however, and internal dissensions, would lead to a decline in the institution's antislavery zeal and in 1835 Owen would sever his affiliation. The recently established Oberlin Collegiate Institute (now [Oberlin College](#)) in the neighboring town of [Oberlin, Ohio](#) would seem more nearly to meet his views, so he would transfer his allegiance to Oberlin and would serve as a trustee of that institution as well as its local agent at Hudson from 1835 to 1844 (his daughter Florilla Brown would be a graduate in the class of 1839 and at least one of his younger sons would be a student there; Florilla would get married with the Reverend Samuel L. Adair, another Oberlin graduate who would become an early missionary to [Kansas](#), they would settle at Osawatomie, and it would be in front of the Adair home that [Frederick Brown](#), son of [John Brown](#), would be gunned down by Border Ruffians guided by a proslavery reverend in the Battle of Osawatomie on August 30th, 1856).


It would no doubt be through the father [Owen](#) that the son [John](#) would initially learn of the gift of [Gerrit Smith](#) of 20,000 acres of wild land to nearby [Oberlin College](#), and it would perhaps be the father who would send him into negotiations with the institution, which would result in a journey down the Ohio and a full month of land-inspection in Tyler County during April and May 1840.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1827

 January 9, Tuesday: [Frederick Brown](#) (1) was born in New Richmond, Crawford County, Pennsylvania, 4th of [John Brown](#)'s and [Dianthe Lusk Brown](#)'s sons.

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

3rd day 9th of 1st M / Yesterday Afternoon I went to Connanicut on buisness at John Tews [?] - after accomplishing which, I went to Joseph Greenes, but arrived there too late to cross the ferry, & Staid all night with them. - This morning after a comfortable breakfast crossed the ferry home.


RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1830

 Summer: [Sam Houston](#) got married with Tiana Rogers in a Cherokee ceremony.


[John Edwin Cook](#) was born in a well-to-do family of Haddam, Connecticut. After being expelled from [Yale](#) on account of an indiscretion, he would become a law clerk in Brooklyn and Manhattan, and in 1855 would become a member of Charles Lenhart's guerrilla force operated out of Lawrence in the [Kansas Territory](#). He would make himself into an excellent shot. He would be dispatched by [John Brown](#) to [Harpers Ferry](#) more than a year before the raid to work out the details on the ground, and would secure employment in the area as a lock tender on the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, as a schoolteacher, and as a bookseller. He would marry a Chambersburg, Pennsylvania woman, Mary V. Kennedy, on April 18, 1859. After escaping by climbing into a tree and watching the fight after Brown had sent him out to collect weapons, and after evading capture for some months, against the advice of his comrades he would become reckless in his search for food, and be captured on October 25, 1859 eight miles from Chambersburg. As an incessant and compulsive communicator he had always been considered by the Brown operatives to be indiscreet, and in a confession which would be published as a pamphlet at Charles Town in the middle of November 1859 for the benefit of Samuel C. Young, a man who had been crippled for life in the fighting at Harper's Ferry, Cook would detail for his captors all his movements — from the point of his 1st meeting with Brown after the battle of Black Jack in June 1856 until after his capture. At the last moment Cook would seek to save his neck by representing that he had been deceived through false promises. For this revelation Cook would be severely censured at the time, being termed "Judas" by the friends of Brown. Despite his confession and despite his brother-in-law A.P. Willard being the governor of Indiana, he would in the end hang for the treason and murder at Harpers Ferry, one of the last to be taken to the gallows, on December 16th.





RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

 December 21, Tuesday: [Frederick Brown](#) (2) was born in New Richmond, Pennsylvania, 5th of [John Brown](#)'s and [Dianthe Lusk Brown](#)'s sons (this child must not have been immediately named, or his name must have been later changed, since he had a brother Frederick, not quite 4 years of age, who at this point still lived).



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1831

 March 31, Thursday: After struggling at Dembe-Wielkie from 5 in the afternoon until 10 at night, Polish forces routed Russian forces.

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

*5th day 31 of 3 M / Attended the Moy [Monthly] Meeting held in [Newport](#) -Ruth Freeborn preached comfortably & the buisness of the Meeting was conducted with the usual regularity & weight with which that Meeting conducts its buisness
But from some circumstances it was a season of depression. -*

[RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS](#)

[Frederick Brown](#) (1) died at New Richmond, Pennsylvania.

Professor [Charles Dexter Cleveland](#) and Miss Alison Nisbet McCoskry, a daughter of Dr. Samuel A. McCoskry, of Carlisle, Pennsylvania and a grand-daughter of Dickinson College's 1st president, Charles Nisbet, were wed. The couple would have nine children: Alison Nisbet Cleveland, Charles Dexter Cleveland, Samuel McCoskry Cleveland, Alison Nisbet Cleveland, Dexter Cleveland, Treadwell Cleveland, Wilberforce Cleveland, Eliza Cleveland, and Lucy Cleveland.



James Hale, in charge of exhibiting the [Chinese](#) "Siamese Twins" Chang and Eng Bunker, wrote from [New-York](#): "We have not had forty ladies since we opened — they you know are our best customers, if we can get them — Our receipts have averaged but \$20 per day— and two nights at the Theatre paid \$50 per night amounting in all — 15 days to 425 dollars ... I expect to go to Philadelphia on Sunday next and try it there, and feel afraid on coming back we shall have to come down to 25 cents to make money."

HDT


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NOT CIVIL WAR

SIAMESTE



SIAMESTE

For Day only.

THE
UNITED BROTHERS, CHANG-ENG,
Very respectfully acquaint the Ladies and Gentlemen of

THAT THEY WILL BE IN THAT PLACE ON

And will receive Visitors at the

The Hours of Admission will be from till in
the noon, and from till in the Evening.

ADMITTANCE 50 CENTS.

Pamphlets, containing an historical account of the Twins, with many interesting particulars never before published, can be purchased at their Room. Price, with an engraved likeness, 12 1-2 cents—with a lithograph, 18 3-4 cents.
The Twins have also a few copies of a very superior likeness, executed in lithograph, and suitable for framing.


NO RE-ADMISSION TO THE ROOM.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1832

 Peter Blow, the proprietor of a boarding house in St. Louis, died. Either before or after his death, his property Dred Scott, who at this point would have been at his full adult height, was sold to a Dr. John Emerson of that city.

[John Brown](#)'s 1st wife [Dianthe Lusk Brown](#) succumbed to a fever shortly after the death of her 7th newborn, another son (she had borne him 5 surviving children).

The Reverend Peter Williams, a Episcopalian priest, helped James McCune Smith –a freed black American who had attended the Free African School of New-York while still enslaved but had then been denied the opportunity as a free man for medical education in the United States of America– enroll in the University of Glasgow in Scotland.





RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1833

→ July 11, Thursday: [John Brown](#)'s 1st wife Dianthe Lusk Brown having died of a fever after giving birth to her 7th infant, he and 16-year-old Mary Ann Day were wed. Mary would take care of Brown's 5 surviving children by Dianthe and would later bear him 13 of her own.⁵ (Among the 20 children of Brown's 2 marriages, 8 would

[MARY ANN DAY BROWN](#)

die in early childhood.

Economic hardships would escalate as Brown attempted to provide for his ever-expanding family.)

→ August: [William Thompson](#) was born in New Hampshire, the son of Roswell Thompson.

(In Fall 1858 he would marry with a Mary Brown who was not related to the family of [John Brown](#). His sister Isabella M. Thompson would marry with [Watson Brown](#) and then his elder brother Henry Thompson would marry with [John Brown](#)'s daughter Ruth. He would start for the [Kansas Territory](#) in 1856 but upon meeting the Brown sons would return with them to [North Elba](#). He and his brother [Dauphin Adolphus Thompson](#) would take part in the raid on the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#) and both would be killed.



Dauphin



William

When Captain Brown would send [William Thompson](#) out from the engine house to negotiate under flag of truce, the mob of citizens would place him under arrest, take him to the local hotel barroom, discussed what to do, drag him into the street, execute him by shooting him in the head, and dump his body into the Potomac River. An interesting fact about this case is that it just about got a young lady into serious trouble. According

5. This wedding may have taken place on June 14th rather than on July 11th.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR


to a letter of explanation she would provide to the local paper, Miss C.C. Fouke was the daughter of the tavernkeeper at Harpers Ferry, operating at the local hotel. The story had gone around, after the fact, that on the 2d day of the raid in her father's saloon in the hotel she had thrown her body in front of Brown conspirator William Thompson while the mob was debating whether or not to off him. Rather than be classed with Pocahontas or with Florence Nightingale, Miss Fouke attempted to explain the rationale for her conduct to the public at large. She had indeed thrown her body between the mob and the captive, she freely confessed, but she had done so, she needed to point out, "without touching him," and she insisted also that her action was not motivated by any concern that this man William Thompson was about to be shot in the head, but rather because her sister-in-law was resting in the next room and should not be disturbed as she was ailing — and/or out of a conviction that Thompson before being offed should be tried by a court of law.)



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1834

 In St. Michaels, [Maryland](#), [Frederick Douglass](#) was assigned by his owner to work for a white farmer, Edward “The Snake” Covey, who had the reputation of a “nigger-breaker,” on his 150-acre rented farm some seven miles to the northwest of St. Michaels, but Mr. Covey had a spot of difficulty with this particular nigger. We notice that at no point was Douglass trying to kill Covey, something reasonable and easy, for he was trying to do something considerably more fraught, get such a person’s attention and then talk turkey to him: “I seized Covey hard by the throat.... I told him....” Strange to relate, although in this struggle Douglass drew blood from Covey and could reasonably have anticipated that as soon as order and propriety had been restored he

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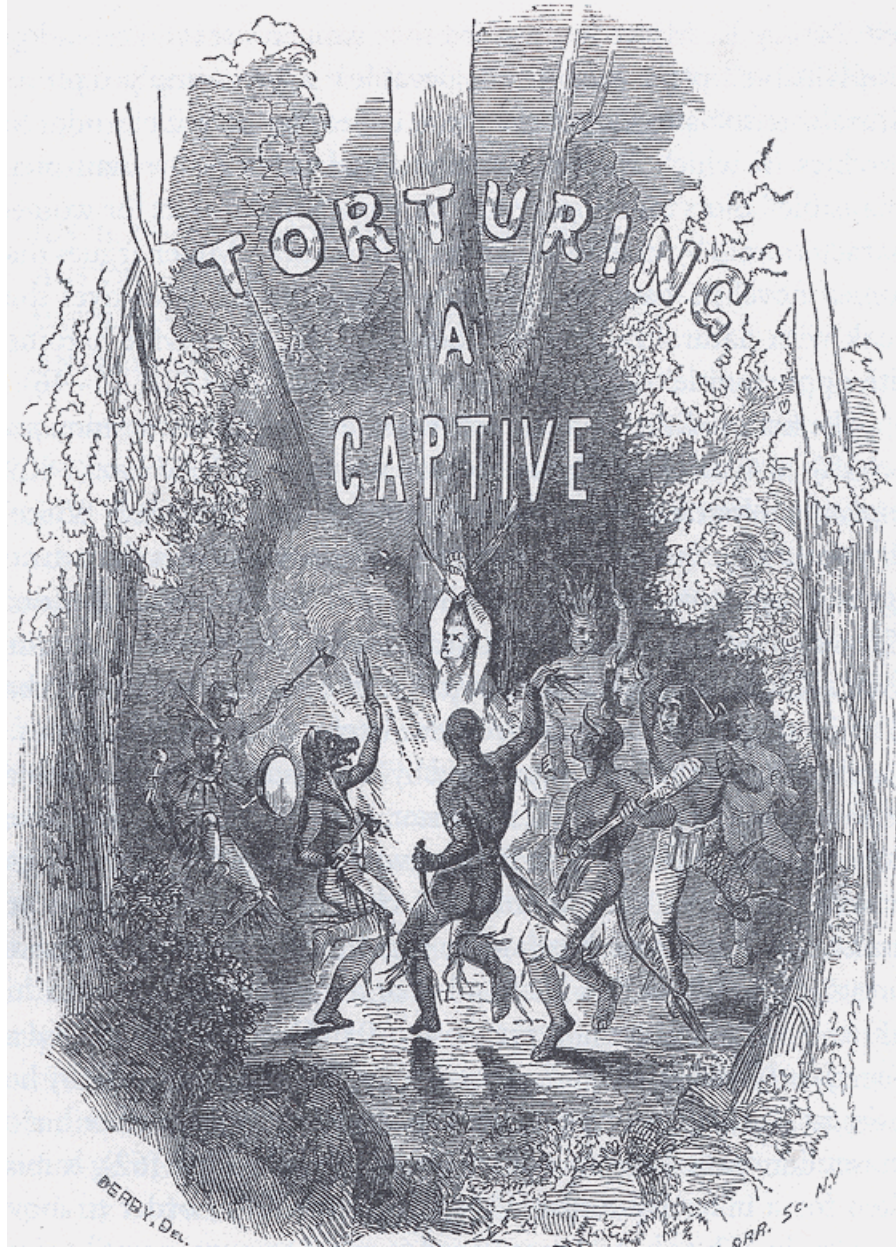
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would be [tortured](#) to death by “The Snake” and his crowd — he found that instead he was no longer being



lashed. Douglass seems to have attributed this to his master’s economic need to obtain maximum work from him with minimum expenditure of effort. Consider this as bravado, in the face of the fact that the only difficulty Covey would have had in killing Douglass, other than in ordering the other laborers to dig a shallow hole in



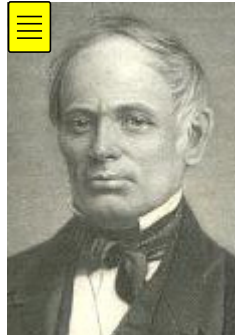
RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

the field alongside the corpse, would have come when he had to reimburse Thomas Auld for his economic loss:

I did not hesitate to let it be known of me, that the white man who expected to succeed in whipping, must also succeed in killing me.

But one wonders whether this hopeless resistance may have inspired Thomas Covey to respect [Frederick Douglass](#) as a man and as a human. I offer that this fight in the fields of [Maryland](#) may well have been a turning-point not only in the individual life of Douglass, but also –unfortunately– in the ideology of nonresistance to evil as espoused by William Ladd, the Reverend [Adin Ballou](#), the Reverend [Henry C. Wright](#),



[Abby Kelley](#), John A. Collins, the Reverend [Samuel Joseph May](#), [Edmund Quincy](#), [John Humphrey Noyes](#) (!),



and [William Lloyd Garrison](#). For later on Douglass would use this memory as fuel for his breach with other antislavery advocates over Garrison's principled nonresistance to evil and as fuel for the encouragement, by the allies of [John Brown](#), of an indigenous uprising of the black slaves of the South, when Douglass began in 1851 to find alternate funding from the "Liberty Party" created by the intemperate wealthy white man [Gerrit Smith](#).

[Richard Hildreth](#)'s REPORT OF A PUBLIC DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE REVS. [ADIN BALLOU](#) AND DANIEL D. SMITH; ON THE QUESTION, "DO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES TEACH THE DOCTRINE, THAT MEN WILL BE PUNISHED AND REWARDED SUBSEQUENTLY TO THIS LIFE, OR AFTER DEATH, FOR THE DEEDS DONE IN THIS LIFE?"



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

[Hildreth](#) created a pamphlet defending Abner Kneeland against a charge of blasphemy, APPEAL TO COMMON SENSE AND THE CONSTITUTION ON BEHALF OF UNLIMITED FREEDOM OF DISCUSSION.

Suffering from [tuberculosis](#), and clinically depressed, the author and editor sold his share in Boston's [The Atlas](#) and sought the more healthful climate of [Florida](#). He would find lodgings on a [slave](#) plantation. During 18 months of tropical sunshine he would create the 1st American antislavery novel, THE SLAVE, OR MEMOIRS OF A FUGITIVE, while laboring toward a description of the deleterious effects on our economic and political development of the South's racist "peculiar institution," that would see publication in 1840 as DESPOTISM IN AMERICA.

His wife, his child, his toil, his blood, his life,
and everything that gives his life a value, they are not his;
he holds them all but at his master's pleasure.



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Because the [Reverend Hosea Hildreth](#) had been exchanging services with pastors of the new [Unitarian](#) persuasion, the Essex Association expelled him as Congregationalist minister over the First Parish Church of Gloucester, Massachusetts. Until his death in the following year, the Reverend Hildreth would be serving as minister of a Unitarian congregation in Westboro, Massachusetts.

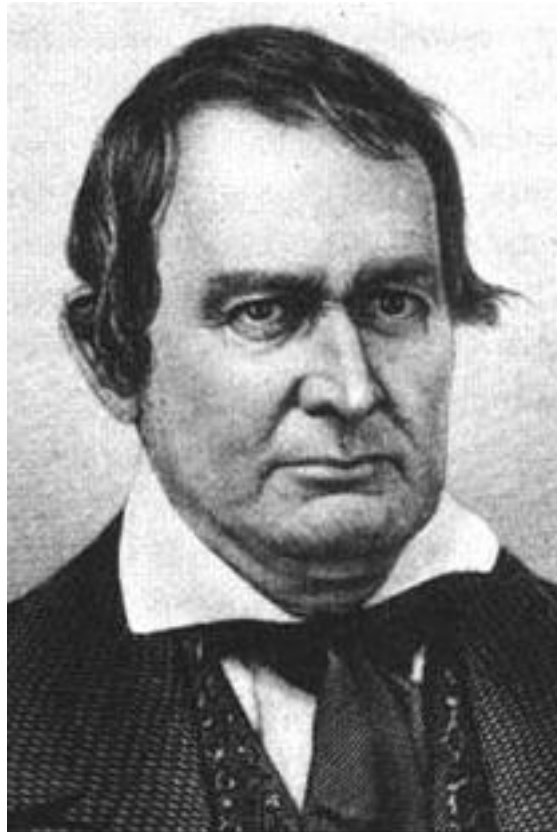
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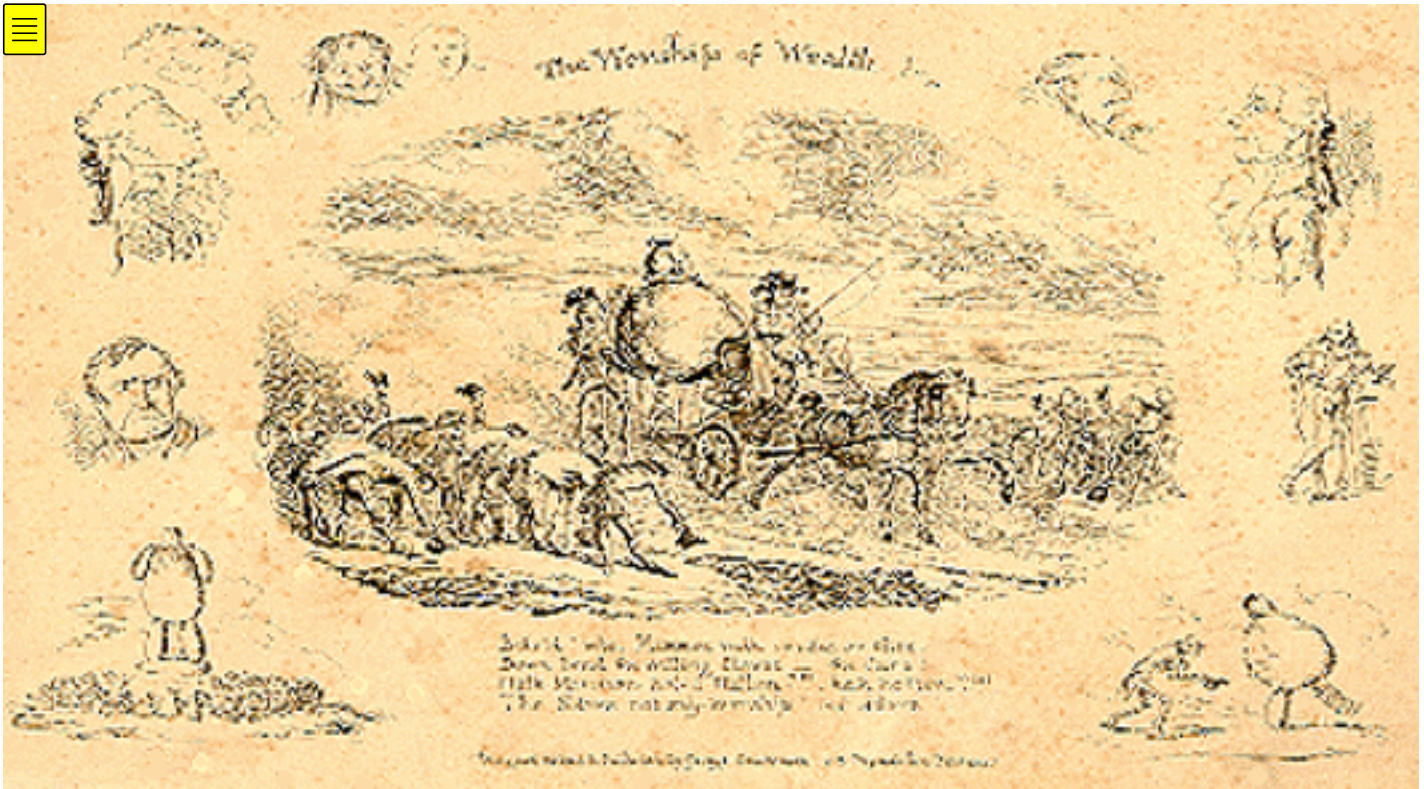
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We see that [Frederick Douglass](#) believed he had already put what would become the doctrine of *ahimsa* to the ultimate test, and that he had already discovered this doctrine to be ultimately wrongheaded — and was following the path of Nehru rather than the path of [Gandhiji](#).

 In this year [John Brown](#) was acting as a postmaster under President Andrew Jackson, at Randolph, Pennsylvania — evidently this job was a political plum issued as a reward for support. He wrote his brother Frederick Brown that he purposed to make active war upon the institution of human [slavery](#), by bringing together some “first-rate abolitionist families” and by undertaking the education of young blacks.

If once the Christians of the free states would set to work in earnest teaching the blacks, the people of the slaveholding states would find themselves constitutionally driven to set about the work of emancipation immediately.

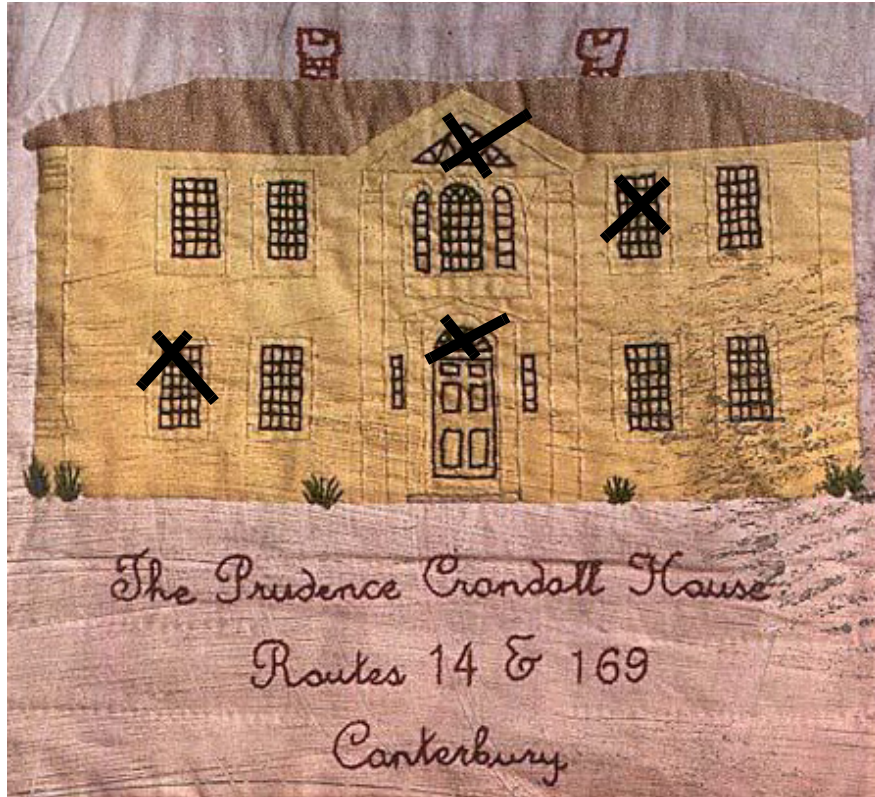
This letter was officially franked and sent for free by Postmaster Brown, as was then the practice.

[Stephen Smith](#) joined with [David Ruggles](#), John Peck, Abraham Shadd, and John B. Vashon, who were the initial black agents for [Freedom’s Journal](#) and later for [The Emancipator](#), in soliciting subscriptions and collecting what were termed “arrearages.”

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September 9, Tuesday: In Canterbury Green, Connecticut, late in the evening, Friend [Prudence Crandall](#)'s home and school building was attacked by men wielding iron bars. In the building's windows, over 90 panes were shattered. Finally the situation had become inadequately safe for the "young ladies and misses of color,"



and they had to be sent home. The State of Connecticut would repeal the law which it had enacted specially for this situation, requiring any school teaching out-of-state pupils to have town approval.

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Shortly afterward, [John Brown](#), a father who never under any circumstances took no for an answer, called together the sons he had had by his deceased 1st wife Dianthe Lusk Brown, [Jason Brown](#) and [Owen Brown](#) and [Frederick Brown](#), got them down on their knees in prayer — and persuaded them to pledge before almighty God that they all would devote their lives to antislavery work.





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1835

 The oldest multiple-arch stone viaduct in the USA, the Thomas Viaduct, was designed by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, Jr. and constructed for the Baltimore & [Ohio](#) Railroad. Eight full-centered arches bridged 617 feet.

Work began on another railroad viaduct, near Canton, Massachusetts for the [Boston and Providence Railroad](#).

Cuttings of *Morus multicaulis* that had been being sold in the previous year for \$3 to \$5 a hundred were at this point being sold for \$10 a hundred. Along the banks of the Cuyahoga River in northern [Ohio](#), at Franklin Mills, a number of investors planned a new company, the Franklin Land Company, that would raise silk worms for an American [silk](#) industry. They had noticed that mulberry trees grew well in this locality, but had yet to discover that in the cold winters of this locale, the silkworm did not thrive. [John Brown](#) got on board, purchasing more than 95 acres with borrowed money. In the national financial crisis of 1837 he would be driven into bankruptcy.

It would have been in about this year that [Catherine Cassidy](#) was born. Her father was James Cassidy (together they would constitute a determined team of American victimizers — and let this serve as a warning to you to be on the alert, and never ever do anything to fix the focus of such opportunists on yourself).

At some point toward the middle of the 1830s, Henry Box Brown, no relation to the above, having reached approximately the age of maturity, got married with an enslaved washerwoman named Nancy.


In about this timeframe [John Buchanan Floyd](#) took up cotton planting and the practice of law at Helena, Arkansas. He would sustain severe financial losses, and he and numerous of his black slaves would succumb to malignant fever.



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1836

 January: Land speculation reached dizzying heights: “They aren’t making any more real estate.” [John Brown](#) moved his family to from Pennsylvania to Franklin Mills, Ohio, and borrowed money to buy land in the area, only to be crushed in the economic turmoil of 1837 (the family would then move on from Ohio to Massachusetts in 1846).

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 October 2, Sunday: The survey ship HMS *Beagle* returned to its home port in England after a 4½-year voyage around the earth of zoological, [botanical](#), and geological discovery that included the Cape Verde islands, both coasts of South America, island groups such as the Galápagos, and the coastal waters of [Australia](#).⁶



For many years [Charles Darwin](#) (who was not the ship’s naturalist but supercargo, a gentleman companion for the ship’s captain FitzRoy, sent along for the explicit purpose of keeping this captain sane despite his long enforced isolation from human contact as the man in command) would have nightmares about the cruel abuse of black [slaves](#) which he had witnessed along the east coast of the South American continent.

[Salmon Brown](#) was born in Hudson, Ohio to [John Brown](#) and [Mary Ann Day Brown](#).



Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) in his journal:

1st day 2nd of 10th M 1836 / Our Morning Meeting was silent & the weather being rainy was small, but to me a good solid meeting. – In the Afternoon it was larger than usual & a pretty good meeting but to me not equal to the Morning – which confirmed me that numbers does no always make weight not even with

6. What would eventually become of HMS *Beagle*? It would be used as a training ship in Japan until 1889, and would then be broken up. For a time, part of its rib cage would be used as a stand for stones piled up near the temple of Suitengu, near the Okai shipyards.



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preaching added to it. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



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1837

 November 7, Tuesday: In a speech, [Waldo Emerson](#) demonstrated that he was not yet ready for the slavery issue.⁷

[Horace Mann, Sr.](#) accepted the offer of the hospitality of the Emerson family to reside with them while in Concord to attend a school convention.

The [abolitionist](#) publisher Reverend [Elijah Parish Lovejoy](#) was killed in Alton, Illinois with a gun in his hand, attempting to defend his final printing press from a white mob.⁸



During a memorial prayer meeting in Hudson, Ohio, [John Brown](#) would stand in the back and suddenly at the age of 37 publicly consecrate his life to the destruction of human enslavement, by any means necessary (he raised his right hand as if taking a vow and spoke a single sentence: “Here before God, in the presence of these witnesses, I consecrate my life to the destruction of slavery”). According to a historian, [Waldo Emerson](#) was also much impressed, although of course Waldo would not offer to do anything more dangerous than talk



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7. Gougeon, Len. "Abolition, The Emersons, and 1837." New England Quarterly 54 (1981): 345-64

"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

Gougeon details [Emerson](#)'s involvement (or lack thereof) with the abolition movement in the years preceding his first antislavery speech delivered in November 1837. Gougeon initially focuses on the interest of Emerson's own family in promoting freedom for the blacks: Emerson's sister Mary and his stepfather the honored Reverend Ezra Ripley were actively "involved in the antislavery agitation of the 1830s and 1840s," the latter consistently supporting the movement until his death in 1841. But the strongest proponent in Emerson's family was his younger brother Charles, with whom Emerson maintained a close relationship. As early as April 1835 Charles publicly declared his opposition to slavery, delivering in Concord a speech, "Lecture on Slavery." It was Emerson's wife, however, who exerted the greatest influence on her husband, for she was "one of [the] most active members from the outset" of the Women's Anti-Slavery Society.

Secondly, in contrast to Boston, "[t]he environment of Concord in the 1830s ... was quite favorable to the abolition cause," acting as a "depot of the underground railroad" and a junction for well-known abolitionists. These frequent antislavery lecturers stirred the community with their ideas, and the many newspaper articles and library acquisitions opposing slavery provided the community with current information.

Although his family and his neighbors participated actively in the abolitionist cause, Emerson remained "largely disengaged from the antislavery agitation" being aware of the issue but unwilling to take a public stand. His reluctance to join the cause was due in part to his adherence to the commonly held belief that the blacks were inferior by nature to the Caucasians and thus, that they would always be subservient. The other factor that confused the issue for Emerson was his emphasis on "individuality, especially individual moral responsibility": Emerson felt that both the "slaves and slave owners are responsible for the unpardonable outrage of slavery, and only they themselves, as individuals, can correct the situation." Reform must come from within – not forcefully from without. Even the gradual abolitionist involvement of his highly respected teacher and friend, the Reverend [William Ellery Channing](#), did not spur Emerson to make a public statement.

But Emerson finally felt compelled to speak out when, on November 7, 1837, an angry mob brutally murdered an abolitionist publisher in Alton, [Illinois](#). In the resultant speech, however, Emerson placed more emphasis on "the need to allow and encourage a free discussion of the question than upon the problem of slavery itself." Instead of taking a strong stand with the abolitionists, he stressed the importance of "individual moral judgment regarding the question of slavery," individual expression of ideas, and an individual need for reform. Hence, neither the abolitionists, his friends, nor Emerson himself was pleased with the speech that was "[t]epid and philosophical to a fault." Emerson, restricted by his own views, was not yet ready to take a strong public stance on an issue he clearly opposed. [Janet B. Ergino (Sommers), May 1989]

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up the idea that other people might feel compelled to do something!

In the midst of a placid lecture on heroism, he suddenly burst out before a Bostonian assembly:

Lovejoy has given his breast to the bullet for his part and had died when it was better not to live. He is absolved [...] I sternly rejoice that one was found to die for humanity and the rights of free speech and opinion.

It is said that a shudder ran through his cultured audience.



[Abby Kelley](#), however, would have held Mr. Lovejoy to a somewhat higher standard:

He had better have died as did our Savior, saying "Father forgive them, they know not what they do."

8. [Elijah Parish Lovejoy](#) was no amateur at this. He had had four prior presses destroyed by white mobs.



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As would the Reverend [Samuel Joseph May](#):

Although May incorrectly assumed that the convention shared his views, he had placed his finger upon the central dilemma of the antislavery movement: the problem of violent means. May failed to gain general acceptance of his opinions, but he proved the more consistent thinker. Without a complete rejection of force, abolitionists had left the door open to acceptance of violence. Self-defense in war naturally paralleled self-defence against the slave owner. The controversy over violent means, which divided the American Peace Society in 1838 and contributed to the demise of the AASS in 1840, began when an angry Alton, [Illinois](#), mob murdered the abolitionist [Elijah Parish Lovejoy](#)....



Except for May, few abolitionists rejected Lovejoy's course. Henry I. Bowditch, a nonresistance advocate, believed that Lovejoy was "the last being on earth an abolitionist ought to think of, if he would be true to the cause he espouses." Both Grimké sisters disapproved of Lovejoy's methods. "There is no such thing as trusting in God and pistols at the same time," Angelina Grimké maintained. May was the only abolitionist to publicly condemn the "martyrdom" of Lovejoy and charge the AASS with duplicity.

[William Lloyd Garrison](#) had declared early on that his quest was for martyrdom:

My trust is in God, my aim is to walk in the footsteps of his son, my rejoicing to be crucified to the world, and the world to me.

Nevertheless, martyrdom was a boon which this benefactor never would be granted:

[William Lloyd Garrison](#), along with [Wendell Phillips](#), [Theodore Dwight Weld](#), [Frederick Douglass](#), and many other prominent leaders of the Anti-Slavery Society never really experienced "the altar." Despite their willingness to be sacrificed to the cause, most of the well-known leaders of the movement did not meet a tragic death. They continued to live valuable and meaningful lives long after slavery had been abolished and they died from natural causes in their seventies and eighties. Other abolitionists, less familiar to the general public, suffered attacks, injuries, and even persecution in their struggle against slavery. These persecuted members were necessary to the antislavery movement, since they provided the connection of blood that bound all committed abolitionists in sacrificial ties. Yet most of these persecuted abolitionists did not reach national prominence. The first and only effective martyr to the abolition movement was [Elijah Parish Lovejoy](#)....

. He was killed by a mob in Dalton, [Illinois](#), on November 17, 1837, and his personal destruction came to be regarded as a forecast of the fate that all human liberty must suffer if slavery were perpetuated. He won the martyr's crown because he died and lost, not because he triumphed. His death also affected for a short time members outside of the abolitionists' ranks. For a decade after Lovejoy's death, lust for martyrdom permeated abolitionism, and many individuals demonstrated in life what he had demonstrated in death. But without the death ritual their suffering had only a



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Here is the matter as it was reported in the Alton Observer:

Night had come to the town of Alton, [Illinois](#) and a crowd began to gather in the darkness.

Some of the men stooped to gather stones. Others fingered the triggers of the guns they carried as they made their way to a warehouse on the banks of the Mississippi River.

As they approached, they eyed the windows of the three-story building, searching for some sign of movement from inside. Suddenly, William S. Gilman, one of the owners of the building, appeared in an upper window.

"What do you want here?" he asked the crowd.

"The press!" came the shouted reply.

Inside the warehouse was [Elijah Parish Lovejoy](#)..., a Presbyterian minister and editor of the Alton Observer. He and 20 of his supporters were standing guard over a newly arrived printing press from the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society.

This was the fourth press that Lovejoy had received for his paper. Three others already had been destroyed by people who opposed the antislavery views he expressed in the Observer. But Lovejoy would not give up.

This time, in an attempt to hide the arrival of the new press, secret arrangements were made. A steamboat delivered the press at 3 o'clock in the morning on November 7, 1837, and some of Lovejoy's friends were there to meet it.

Moving quickly, they carried the press to the third floor of Gilman's warehouse, but not before they were spotted by members of the mob.

Word of the arrival of the press spread throughout the town all that day. As nightfall approached, mob leaders were joined by men from the taverns, and now the crowd stood below, demanding this fourth press.

Gilman called out: "We have no ill feelings toward, any of you and should much regret to do any injury; but we are authorized by the Mayor to defend our property and shall do so with our lives." The mob began to throw stones, breaking out all the windows in the warehouse.

Shots were fired by members of the mob, and rifle balls whizzed through the windows of the warehouse, narrowly missing the defenders inside. Lovejoy and his men, returned the fire. Several people in the crowd were hit, and one was killed.

"Burn them out!", someone shouted.

Leaders of the mob called for a ladder, which was put up on the side of the building. A boy with a torch was sent up to set fire to the wooden roof. Lovejoy and one of his supporters, Royal Weller, volunteered to stop the boy. The two men crept outside, hiding in the shadows of the building. Surprising the mob, they rushed to the ladder, pushed it over and quickly retreated inside.

Once again a ladder was put in place. As Lovejoy and Weller made another brave attempt to overturn the ladder, they were spotted. Lovejoy was shot five times, and Weller was also wounded.



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Lovejoy staggered inside the warehouse, making his way to the second floor before he finally fell.
"My God. I an shot," he cried. He died almost immediately. By this time the warehouse roof had begun to burn. The men remaining inside knew they had no choice but to surrender the press. The mob rushed into the vacant building. The press Lovejoy died defending was carried to a window and thrown out onto the river bank. It was broken into pieces that were scattered in the Mississippi River. Fearing more violence, Lovejoy's friends, did not remove his body from the building until the next morning. Members of the crowd from the night before, feeling no shame at what they had done, laughed and jeered as the funeral wagon moved slowly down the street toward Lovejoy's home. Lovejoy was buried on November 9, 1837, his 35th birthday.

FIGURING OUT WHAT AMOUNTS TO A "HISTORICAL CONTEXT" IS WHAT THE CRAFT OF HISTORICIZING AMOUNTS TO, AND THIS NECESSITATES DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE SET OF EVENTS THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE EVENT E COULD BECOME POSSIBLE, AND MOST CAREFULLY DISTINGUISHING THEM FROM ANOTHER SET OF EVENTS THAT COULD NOT POSSIBLY OCCUR UNTIL SUBSEQUENT TO EVENT E.



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1840

At a house on Lorain Street in [Oberlin, Ohio](#), two slave catchers from [Kentucky](#) captured two escaped slaves — a man and a woman. They attempted to leave the Oberlin area with the slaves but word of their actions had spread to the town where some residents were at a chapel meeting. The churchgoers rushed out to pursue the slavecatchers and caught them about three miles from the village. The slavecatchers appealed to the court in Elyria, Ohio but were themselves arrested on a charge of house-breaking. The runaway slaves were put into jail while the slavecatchers were released on bail. But before the slave catchers could go on trial one died. The other one was released when it turned out that the two runaway slaves, who had been in jail, had themselves escaped to freedom.

(Or so we now hear. The problem is, there are any number of stories using this sort of scenario — and in all likelihood some of these stories amount merely to half-remembered variants of others.)

[John Brown](#) had removed from Pennsylvania to Ohio in 1836 but his family had done no better there. In this year he surveyed land in western Virginia belonging to [Oberlin College](#), seemingly with some scheme to create a colony in that area for free Americans of color.

[Thaddeus Hyatt](#) et al. secured Patent No. 1,867 “Manufacture of Splints or Sticks for Friction and Other Matches.”

April 2, Thursday: Nearly a full year after [Gerrit Smith](#)’s letter of gift, [John Brown](#) was at [Oberlin College](#) in conference with the Prudential Committee of the College. After some discussion he made a proposal in writing:

Oberlin 2d April 1840
Gentlemen of the Prudential Committee
In negotiating in regard to the Virginia lands or any investigation to be made in regard to the title or boundary of those lands I wish to be perfectly frank. I wish to see those lands with a particular view to settle my family on them if I can find encouragement sufficient to justify me in so doing, and in offering my service as a surveyor, am not induced to do it for the sake of getting employment or wages. If you are disposed to send me I will charge you but one dollar pr day with the addition of a moderate allowance for such expense as shall of necessity be incurred.... If I should settle my family on those lands I believe I could be the means of rendering them a source of allmost immediate income to your institution, and believe the institution can well afford to be quite liberal towards a family like my own who should go to commence a settlement upon them. The three eldest of my children are sons, all resolute, energetic, intelligent boys & as I trust of verry decided religious character, such as I think will if they are continued will prove to be valuable members of any community, or faithful and competent agents should they be kneeded. The business we now follow is mainly wool growing in which branch I have been



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hitherto prosperous.
Respectfully yours,
John Brown.



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April 3, Friday: The colored citizens of Boston defended, in the pages of The Liberator, the manner in which that gazette had been being administered by William Lloyd Garrison:

Verdict of the Colored Citizens of Boston.

Pursuant to appointment, a very large body of colored citizens, male and female, assembled at an early hour on Thursday evening, March 19th, 1840, at the Infant School Room, Belknap-street. John T. Hilton called the meeting to order, and read the following call:

NOTICE.

The colored inhabitants of Boston, without distinction of sex, friendly to the course pursued by Wm. Lloyd Garrison, are invited to assemble at the Infant School Room, on Thursday evening, March 19th, at 7 o'clock. A heavy charge against the veteran editor of the Liberator, and also a gross libel upon the colored population of this city, have appeared in the organization paper, over the signature of 'A Colored Man,' upon which you are called to sit in judgment. Fail not—every one to his post.

Peter Gray,	Christopher Weeden,
Wm. Riley,	James Burr,
Thomas Henson,	Wm. G. Nell,
David Rue,	Joel W. Lewis,
Colin Pitts,	John Rogers,
Wm. Wright,	John B. Cutler,
John Levy,	John T. Hilton,
John Thompson,	George Washington,
Benjamin Weeden,	Wm. C. Nell.
Benjamin P. Bassett,	

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John B. Cutler was unanimously appointed chairman, and William C. Nell and Christopher R. Weeden, Secretaries.

On motion, the communication of 'A Colored Man,' published in the Massachusetts Abolitionist of the 13th inst., was read by one of the Secretaries.

By this time, the room was so crowded that the meeting adjourned to the Baptist Church, which had been politely granted for the purpose.

The assemblage having proceeded to the church, the Throne of Grace was fervently addressed by Rev. Samuel Snowden.

On motion of J. T. Hilton, a committee was appointed to draft resolutions, expressive of the sense of the meeting. The following gentlemen were named—John T. Hilton, J. W. Lewis, J. G. Barbers, J. B. Smith, and H. Weeden.

During the absence of the committee, the article in the Liberator of February 28th, headed 'Deceit Unmasked,'—also that of March 20th, containing the letter of J. V. Himes—&c. &c. were read by one of the Secretaries.

Remarks were offered by Geo. Washington, D. D. Rev. S. Snowden, and Wm. C. Nell—expressing their attachment to the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, &c. &c. when the committee presented their Report, as follows:

Resolved, That whereas the Massachusetts Abolitionist of the 13th inst. contains an article over the signature of a 'A Colored Man,' charging the old Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, and the editor of the Liberator, with recreancy to the first principles of abolition; and whereas he claims to give offence to the sentiments and feelings of the colored population of Boston; therefore we feel called upon, out of respect to ourselves, and to the old Society, to whose principles of equal rights, liberty, and humanity, we subscribe, to register our united and unqualified denial of the truth of these unwarranted assertions.

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Resolved, That the position taken by the author, where he says, 'Touch one colored man, and you touch all,' would not seem to be true in all cases; for the poor slaves are daily touched, and there are some, we regret to say, among us, who have little or no sympathy for them, if we judge even by the scripture standard, 'Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.' Again—there are no exceptions to this rule, persons might be sheltered from justice, who are guilty of crimes of the deepest dye, and that simply because they are colored.

Resolved, That whereas the same writer has said, that were a meeting called of the colored people to try their votes on the merits of the two societies in question, they would give their hearty amen in favor of the new—we pronounce it a wholesale falsehood, and feel justified in saying, that the spirit which prompted him in penning said article was actuated neither by truth nor self-respect.

Resolved, That, so far from our confidence being shaken in the integrity of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, or that of the veteran editor of the *Liberator*, as stated in the article above alluded to, daily proofs of their real merits increase our attachment, and bind us stronger to them; and of Mr. Garrison we can truly add, that we doubt not that the day will come, when many an emancipated slave will say of him, while weeping over his monument, 'This was my best friend and benefactor. I here bathe his tomb with the tears of that liberty, which his services and sufferings achieved for me.'

Resolved, That to slander Garrison, and pronounce him a hypocrite, is certainly the most unkind and ungrateful expression that could ever escape the lips of any colored man, and is what we least expected to hear, after so much toil and suffering in our behalf; and we rejoice that such spirits are few and far between.

On the adoption of the resolutions, a discussion ensued, in which the following gentlemen participated—Geo. Washington, John Levy, Joshua B. Smith, J. H. Gover, J. T. Hilton and J. G. Barbadoes, when they were unanimously adopted by a rising vote.

John Levy suggested the propriety of affording an opportunity to those who did not concur in the adoption of the resolutions, to present their objections. None were offered.

Joshua B. Smith offered the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the man or men who wrote the article against Mr. Garrison, are like unto the new organization, seeking nothing more than personal interest; and we, as a body, do detest their conduct, for it is founded on deception; and if we follow them, they will lead us to destruction, instead of elevation.

Christopher R. Weeden offered the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That we will, while life remains, prove steadfast and true to the old Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and its auxiliaries, while they continue to plead the cause of the down-trodden sons of America with their past zeal, and also our claim to the rights and privileges of independent citizens of the United States, irrespective of color.

On motion of J. T. Hilton, a committee was appointed to obtain the publication of the proceedings in the *Massachusetts Abolitionist*, *Liberator* and *Colored American*; and also to request of the editor of the *Abolitionist*, the name of the author of the communication alluded to. The committee consisted of J. G. Barbadoes, J. T. Hilton, J. E. Scarlett, Wm. C. Nell, and John P. Coburn.

J. T. Hilton spoke in reply to the query, what has the old society done?

Among other remarks, he said,—the old society overthrew the Colonization Society. It has quelled the mobocratic spirit, and given birth to the American Anti-Slavery Society. It has uniformly elected colored men as members of the Board of Managers. It has secured the right to a trial by jury for fugitive slaves—gained equal rights for colored people in Providence and Worcester cars. Through its influence, four colleges have opened their doors for the admission of colored youth on equal terms with the whites. And, finally, it has obtained in the Massachusetts Legislature the passage of resolutions in favor of immediate emancipation. Messrs. Garrison and Knapp have, at different times, appropriated over six hundred dollars, towards assisting colored persons, &c. &c.

Great enthusiasm was manifested at the close of the meeting, in view of the proceedings, which were concluded by singing, 'From all that dwell below the skies,' to the tune of Old Hundred.

JOHN B. CUTLER, *Chairman*.

WILLIAM C. NELL,
CHRISTOPHER R. WEEDEN, } *Secretaries*.



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[John Brown](#)'s proposal was accepted and he became an agent of [Oberlin College](#), authorized "to enter upon, explore and occupy, a certain tract of land in the County of Tyler in the state of Virginia ... to lease or rent the said lands or any part thereof ... to demand and receive and if necessary sue for and collect any and all moneys due for rent or damage due from tenants or former occupants ... and to do all other acts and things ... which the Board of Trustees may themselves lawfully do" (this formal power of attorney bore the signatures of President Asa Mahan and Secretary Levi Burnell, with an official seal).

The Institute provided its new agent with a \$50 cash advance. Secretary Burnell immediately corresponded to advise Trustee [Owen Brown](#) of the action they had taken: "Should he [your son [John Brown](#)] succeed in clearing up titles without difficulty or lawsuits, it would be easy, as it appears to me, to make provision for religious and school privileges, and by proper efforts, with the blessing of God, soon see that wilderness bud and blossom as the rose."

April 14, Tuesday: [John Brown](#) set out from Franklin Mills, Ohio, and began to note every item of expense against his \$50 cash advance in a little book, to the half cent. When he would return on May 16th, the book would reveal about \$33 in expenses for [Oberlin College](#) including charges for guides and other help.

May 16, Saturday: When [John Brown](#) had set out from Franklin Mills, Ohio to act under power of attorney for [Oberlin College](#), he had begun to note his expenses in a little book to the half cent. At this point he returned and the book indicated about \$33 in expenses including charges for guides and other help (presumably he would be able to return about \$17 of his \$50 cash advance to the college).



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1841

April 28, Wednesday: [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#), while returning from a jaunt to downtown Boston to the scene of his necessitude at [Brook Farm](#), caught himself a conveniently incapacitating cold upon which he would report in THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE:

Belovedest, thy husband was caught by a cold, during his visit to Boston. It has not affected his whole frame, but took entire possession of his head, as being the weakest and most vulnerable part. Never didst thou hear anybody sneeze with such vehemence and frequency; and his poor brain has been in a thick fog – or rather, it seemed as if his head was stuffed with coarse wool. I know not when I have been so pestered before; and sometimes I wanted to wrench off my head, and give it a great kick, like a foot-ball. This annoyance has made me endure the bad weather with even less than ordinary patience; and my faith was so far exhausted, that, when they told me yesterday that the sun was setting clear, I would not even turn my eyes toward the west. But, this morning, I am made all over anew; and have no greater remnant of my cold, than will serve as an excuse for doing no work to-day.

[Henry Thoreau](#) revealed himself, in his journal, as utterly antagonistic to the sort of credit-report agenda being sponsored by [Lewis Tappan](#) at his Mercantile Agency in Manhattan:



April 28: We falsely attribute to men a determined character — putting together all their yesterdays — and averaging them — we presume we know them Pity the man who has a character to support — it is worse than a large family — he is silent poor indeed. But in fact character is never explored, nor does it get developed in time — but eternity is its development — time its envelope. In view of this distinction, a sort of divine politeness and heavenly good breeding suggests itself — to address always the enveloped character of a man. I approach a great nature with infinite expectation and uncertainty, not knowing what I may meet. It lies as broad and unexplored before me as a scraggy hillside or pasture. I may hear a fox bark, or a partridge [Ruffed Grouse [Bonasa umbellus](#) (Partridge)] drum, or some bird new to these localities may fly up. It lies out there as old, and yet as new. The aspect of the woods varies every day, what with their growth and the changes of the seasons and the influence of the elements, so that the eye of the forester never twice rests upon the same prospect. Much more does a character show newly and variedly, if directly seen. It is the highest compliment to suppose that in the intervals of conversation your companion has expanded and grown. It may be a deference which he will not understand, but the nature which underlies him will understand it, and your influence will be shed as finely on him as the dust in the sun settles on our clothes. By such politeness we may educate one another to some purpose. So have I felt myself educated sometimes; I am expanded and enlarged.



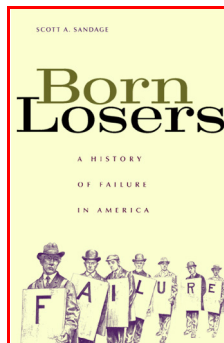
How could one know the soul of a stranger when it was so hard



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to know oneself or bosom relations? If John Beardsley was the intelligence agency's constant legal antagonist, its cultural antithesis was embodied by its strange visitor of 1843: Henry Thoreau. "We falsely attribute to men a determined character – putting together all their yesterdays – and averaging them – we presume we know them," he wrote in 1841. Yet the narrator of *WALDEN* called himself a "reporter," and he logged two million words in forty-seven journals. He painstakingly indexed and cross-referenced his notebooks, believing that such methods aided unconventional thinking – about wild apples, wild hogs, wild men, or his wild idea that individualism meant more than conventional choices between success and failure. "It is hard to know men by rumor only," he complained [at some point between 1842 and 1844]. He hated how commerce sorted people by price and grade, yet his own creativity owed much to information management. Thoreau had become a credit reporter, after all. If Lewis Tappan and Henry Thoreau never again crossed paths, they had a mutual acquaintance who declared bankruptcy in 1842. A failed surveyor, farmer, speculator, schoolteacher, tanner, and cattleman, he showed up as a wool dealer in an 1848 credit report: "his condition is questionable." Winter 1849: "may or may not be good." Summer 1850: "his means are equally obscure." Still in his forties, he looked sixty to credit reporters. The agency lost him when he switched lines of work yet again, only to fail yet again. Like many another misfit who pushed a doomed venture too far, he quit when he had no other choice. Having grown whiskers for the first time, his craggy face looked still more ancient. Everyone had an opinion of this broken man. "Served him right." Overhearing such comments, Thoreau said he felt proud even to know him and questioned why people "talk as if a man's death were a failure, and his continued life, be it of whatever character, were a success." The bankrupt court had restored this loser's freedom in 1842. Now it was 1859, and no earthly court could save [John Brown](#) after his failure at Harpers Ferry.



[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**RACE WAR,****NOT CIVIL WAR****1842**

April 20, Wednesday: Water was let into Lock #18 of the Enlarged [Erie Canal](#) at Cohoes, which was following a new route (the old route would be sold to the Cohoes Company as a power canal).

[John Brown](#) wrote from New Albany, Pennsylvania to Thomas Matthews of [Baltimore](#). He would post this letter on the following day:

New Albany April 20. 1842
Esteemed Friend
I Received A letter from Beulah stating
that she is in want of Money to pay her debts and
George owes her and she can not get it from him
I wrote to her to let the know the amount and if
George wold pay her out of his money I am willing
that he should do it for I believe he will never
save a sufficiency to pay his board as long as he has any
thing in our hands she wants one hundred Dollars
I informed her that if George did not owe her that much
I wold give an order on the for the balance
I wrote to the in answer to one that I Received from the
but I have Received no Answer please write on the Receipt
of this times are due here and people breaking duty
produce Low Money score and nothing that I can
see to Make them better therefore we must wait the
Some with patience
With Respect John Brown
Thos Matthews

“Esteemed Friend I recived A letter from Beulah stating that she is in want of Money to pay her debts and George owes her and she can not get it from him I wrote to her to let the know the amount and if George wold



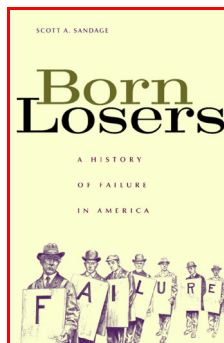
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pay her out of his money I am willing that he should do it for I believe he will never save a sufficiency to pay his board as long as he has any thing in our hands She wants one hundred dollars Informed her that if George Did not owe her that much I would give an order on the for the balance I wrote to the in answer to one that I Recived from the but I have Recived no Answer please write on the receipt of this Times are dul here and people Braking Daily produce Low Money scarce and nothing that I can see to Make them better tharefore we must wait the lou with patiens With Respect John Brown Thos Matthews”

September 28, Thursday: A federal court decided [John Brown](#)'s bankruptcy case, as the culmination of years of dicey business decisions. His creditors were awarded all but the essentials which the Brown family needed to sustain life — but this proceeding did free him.

A failed surveyor, farmer, speculator, schoolteacher, tanner, and cattleman, he showed up as a wool dealer in an 1848 credit report: "his condition is questionable." Winter 1849: "may or may not be good." Summer 1850: "his means are equally obscure." Still in his forties, he looked sixty to credit reporters. The agency lost him when he switched lines of work yet again, only to fail yet again. Like many another misfit who pushed a doomed venture too far, he quit when he had no other choice. Having grown whiskers for the first time, his craggy face looked still more ancient. Everyone had an opinion of this broken man. "Served him right." Overhearing such comments, Thoreau said he felt proud even to know him and questioned why people "talk as if a man's death were a failure, and his continued life, be it of whatever character, were a success." The bankrupt court had restored this loser's freedom in 1842. Now it was 1859, and no earthly court could save [John Brown](#) after his failure at Harpers Ferry.





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[Waldo Emerson](#) continued in his journal:

Next morning, we begun our walk at 6¹/₂ o'clock for the Shaker Village distant 3¹/₂ miles. Whilst the good Sisters were getting ready our breakfast, we had a conversation with Seth Blanchard & Cloutman of the Brethren, who gave an honest account by yea & by nay of their faith & practice. They were not stupid like some whom I have seen of their society, & not worldly like others.... From the Shaker Village we came to Littleton, & thence to Acton, still in the same redundance of splendour. It was like a day of July, and from Acton we sauntered leisurely homeward to finish the nineteen miles of our second day before four in the afternoon.

After the two walkers returned to [Concord](#), [Margaret Fuller](#) came visiting the Emerson home for two weeks.

[Lidian Emerson](#) was on [opium](#) and began to fantasize connections between Margaret and Waldo, and Margaret had to defend by pointing out that on two of the evenings Lidian supposed she spent talking to Waldo, actually she had been with [Ellery Channing](#) or [Henry Thoreau](#) while Waldo had been alone, writing in his study.



There was embarrassment at the dining table when Lidian burst into tears at an imagined slight. After the meal the two women went walking and evidently bonded somewhat, for Lidian confided to Margaret that “she has a lurking hope that Waldo’s character will alter, and that he will be capable of an intimate union.”

Margaret mused on this in her journal:

I suppose the whole amount of the feeling is that women cant bear to be left out of the question. ...when Waldo’s wife, and the mother of that child that is gone [Waldo Jr.] thinks me the most privileged of women, & that EH [[Elizabeth Hoar](#)] was happy because her love [Charles (?) Emerson] was snatched away for a life long separation, & thus she can know none but ideal love: it does seem a little too insulting at first blush. - And yet they are not altogether wrong.




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An entanglement arose when [Ellery Channing](#) wanted to visit his former love Caroline Sturgis on [Naushon Island](#) one last time, at her suggestion, before his new wife [Ellen Fuller Channing](#) would arrive in [Concord](#) from Boston. [Margaret Fuller](#) had no objection and Ellery went to Naushon but then Ellen arrived early in Concord and discovered his absence and Margaret was unwilling to admit where he was — and everyone became rather upset. Margaret recorded:

☰ If I were Waldo's wife, or Ellery's wife, I should acquiesce in all these relations, since they needed them. I should expect the same feeling from my husband, & I should think it little in him not to have it. I felt I should never repent of advising Ellery to go whatsoever happened. Well, he came back next day, and All's Well that Ends Well.... Mama [Emerson's mother [Ruth Haskins Emerson](#)] & Lidian sympathized with me almost with tears. Waldo looked radiant, & HT [Henry Thoreau] as if his tribe had won a victory. Well it was a pretty play, since it turned out no tragedy at last. Ellery told Ellen at once how it was, and she took it just as she ought.

Bronson Alcott, Henry Wright, Charles Lane, and Lane's son William who was about 9 years of age, embarked at Gravesend on the *Leland* for Boston. They brought a large library of books on mysticism to be used "in the commencement of an Institution for the nurture of men in universal freedom of action, thought, and being." More important, Lane brought his life savings of approximately \$2,000.⁰⁰. Wright's bride and infant waited in England for developments. 

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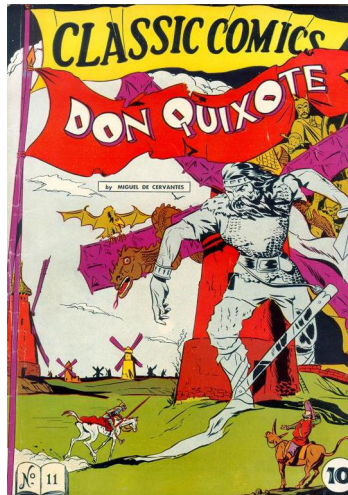
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August 2, Tuesday: [Bronson Alcott](#) wrote [Abba Alcott](#) that on a 3d visit to [Thomas Carlyle](#), they had quarreled outright.

I shall not see him again.

Carlyle wrote [Waldo Emerson](#) about the encounter, describing Alcott's "long, lean face and figure, with his gray worn temples and mild radiant eyes," speaking of him as genial, innocent, simple-hearted, good, venerable, but declaring him a Don Quixote "bent on saving the world by a return to acorns and the golden age,"⁹ a man "whom nobody can even laugh at without loving" but nevertheless a "bottomless imbecile."



He warned Emerson against allowing his public reputation in England to become entangled with that of such a person. Emerson, frightened for his reputation, wrote to Alcott in England, warning that while his English friends could trust his "theories" they could not trust his "statement of facts." And Emerson ordered Alcott to show this letter to his English friends, and Alcott did this.

[THE ALCOTT FAMILY](#)

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1843

Fall: In Fairfield South Carolina, one John Brown was sentenced “to hang by the neck until your body be dead” for having aided a South Carolinian who was trying to escape from enslavement. But this had not been the famous

9. Since Don Quijote was *un hombre exageradamente grave y serio o puntilloso*, this was a fine and accurate description of Concord’s own knight of the woebegone countenance. This is what [John Brown](#) looked like in 1842, as a failed businessman,



but the above description would also be a fine description, later, of a more mature John Brown: If [Bronson Alcott](#) could be said to have been a Quijote whose favorite reading was the New Testament, it could be said of Brown that he was a Quijote whose favorite reading was the Old. For [Miguel de Cervantes](#) put into the mouth of his antihero the following words:




These saints and knights were of the same profession as myself, which is the calling of arms. Only there is this difference between them and me, that they were saints, and fought with divine weapons, and I am a sinner and fight with human ones.





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northern interloper of 1859 [John Brown](#), this had been a man from Maine named John L. Brown. The national and international petitions for clemency in this case, flowing across the desk of Governor James Henry Hammond (1810-1864), would cause the governor to commute the sentence of death and then to respond at length in defense of the institution of chattel slavery and in opposition to the practice of slave stealing, and eventually, in late May and June of 1844,  and in 1853,  and in 1860,  this Southern gentleman's considered responses would receive general publication.

December 23, Saturday: [Anne Brown](#) was born at Richfield, Ohio to [John Brown](#) and [Mary Ann Day Brown](#) (some sources say September 23d).

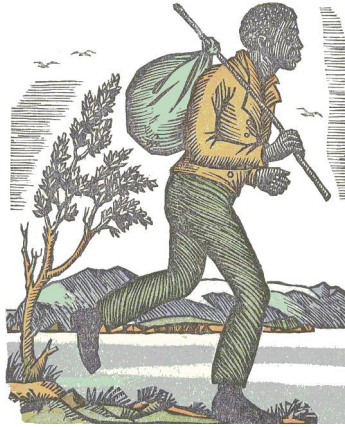


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1846

On the anniversary of West India emancipation, [Gerrit Smith](#), an immensely wealthy landowner in New York state, offered to give 100,000 acres of wild land in the mountains of the northern part of the state to such families of color, fugitive slaves, or others as would begin to clear the land and establish 40-acre farmsteads there. There was enough land for 3,000 such families, but this was from the beginning a marginal proposal



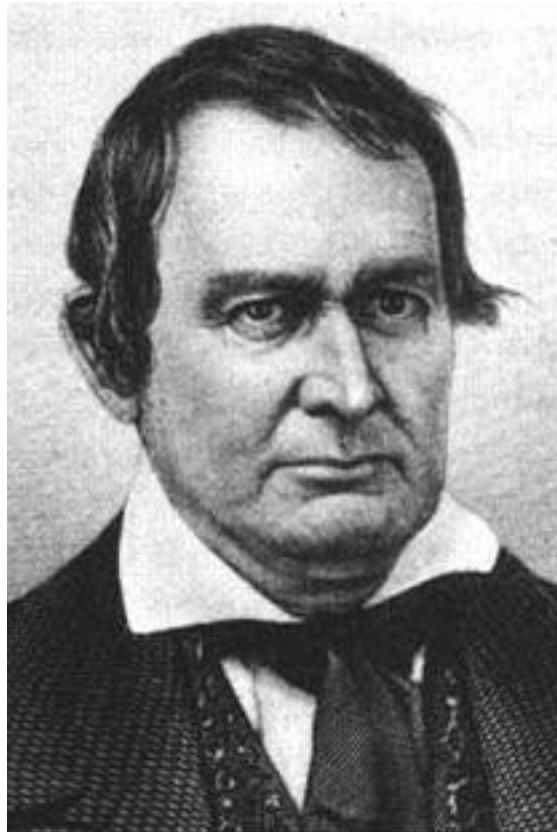
since due to the weather conditions and topography there was no prospect of raising either wheat or maize as a cash crop. [John Brown](#) would convince himself, nevertheless, that he could be of much use to such settlers, and in 1848 or 1849 would purchase a farm from Smith and remove the younger part of his family to North Elba, where they would make their home until his death. His wife and young children would live there with the greatest frugality while he himself would often be away on antislavery enterprises, forming, for instance, at Springfield, Massachusetts, his former home, his “League of Gileadites” pledged to the rescue of fugitive slaves. (We don’t have the details of how many such 40-acre parcels would actually be signed over by this immensely wealthy white man of problematic politics, or how many black families actually would become



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involved.)



1847

[John Buchanan Floyd](#) was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates.

[John Brown](#) posed holding a flag, with right hand upraised as in oathtaking, for Augustus Washington, a black Daguerreotypist of Hartford, Connecticut.¹⁰



(The Daguerreotype of [Frederick Douglass](#) at the National Portrait Gallery dates to about this year.)

At the age of 15, in England, [Richard Realf](#) began to pen verses.

Eliza Ann Whapham was born in this year at Uckfield in Sussex, to Eliza Whapham and Charles Henry Whapham.

10. You will note that, since this is a Daguerreotype, it presents a mirror image and it would thus appear to us now, who have become accustomed to positive photographs made from negatives, as if Brown had been swearing the oath of fealty using his left hand. The photo was recently purchased for the National Portrait Gallery upon a bid of \$129,000, after having been for some time unlocatable.



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[John Brown](#) allowed himself to be persuaded by his son [John Brown, Jr.](#), in training as a [phrenologist](#), to have his skull examined by the world-class phrenologist Orson Fowler, and found that he had “a pretty good opinion of yourself” and that he “would rather lead than be led” (things which presumably he already knew).



“You might be persuaded but to drive you would be impossible. You like your own way, and to think and act for yourself — are quite independent and dignified, open and plain, say just what you think, and most heartily despise hypocrisy and artificiality.” What a marvelous thing was [phrenology](#), in the way of the granting of permission for one’s chosen viciousnesses!



[Walton Felch](#) had been lecturing throughout New England, using as exhibits the two skulls he had recovered from the battlefield grave in Concord. He had also been lecturing on mesmerism, hydropathy, geology, and astronomy. A typical review of one of his performance had been that “we were instructed and well entertained



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by the Lecturer [and] we hope to be able to hear the gentleman further on this subject at future meetings.” However, such a trajectory was not without its controversies, and in consequence a friend of his, James H. Desper, felt obliged to proclaim for the benefit of the readers of the Barre Gazette of Philadelphia, the following:

Veto! Veto!! Veto!!!!

I, James H. Desper of Barre, having lately heard a variety of Reports apparently designed to raise a public prejudice against Dr. W. Felch, and thereby hinder him from giving proofs of the healing power of Mesmerism and Pure Water as applied by himself; – 1st, that he was turned out of my house; 2nd, that he injured the health of my wife and others while boarding here; 3rd, that he has been suspected of breaking open our store, &c. &c. I hereby give notice, and my wife sets her signature with mine, that all these reports are most villainous falsehoods.



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June 26, Saturday: [John Brown](#) showed up at an assembly of political abolitionists in Syracuse, New York, armed with his son [John Brown, Jr.](#)'s letter of the 24th, and made a speech offering himself as the leader for the forces of a free [Kansas](#). Although [Frederick Douglass](#) stood in the audience and endorsed Brown and his mission, when the money in the hat that had been passed was counted, it was found that only \$60 had been gathered. Brown



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would have to spend this petty cash on his family.

Most of us can remember some event or incident which has at some time come to us, and made itself a permanent part of our lives. Such an incident came to me in the year 1847. I had then the honor of spending a day and night under the roof of a man, whose character and conversation made a very deep impression on my mind and heart; and as the circumstance does not lie entirely out of our present observations, you will pardon for a moment a seeming digression. The name of the person alluded to had been several times mentioned to me, in a tone that made me curious to see him and to make his acquaintance. He was a merchant, and our first meeting was at his store – a substantial brick building, giving evidence of a flourishing business. After a few minutes' detention here, long enough for me to observe the neatness and order of the places, I was conducted by him to his residence where I was kindly received by his family as an expected guest. I was a little disappointed at the appearance of this man's house, for after seeing his fine store, I was prepared to see a fine residence; but this logic was entirely contradicted by the facts. The house was a small, wooden one, on a black street in a neighborhood of laboring men and mechanics, respectable enough, but not just the spot where one would expect enough, but not just the spot where one would expect to find the home of a successful merchant. Plain as was the outside, the inside was plainer. Its furniture might have pleased a Spartan. It would take longer to tell what was not in it, than what was; no sofas, no cushions, no curtains, no carpets, no easy rocking chairs inviting to enervation of rest or repose. My first meal passed under the misnomer of tea. It was none of your tea and toast sort, but potatoes and cabbage, and beef soup; such a meal as a man might relish after following the plough all day, or after performing a forced march of a dozen miles over rough ground in frosty weather. Innocent of paint, veneering, varnish or tablecloth, the table announced itself unmistakably and honestly pine and of the plainest workmanship. No hired help passed from kitchen to dining room, staring in amazement at the colored man at the white man's table. The mother, daughters and sons did the serving, and did it well. I heard no apology for doing their own work; they went through it as if used to it, untouched by any thought of degradation or impropriety. Supper over, the boys helped to clear the table and wash the dishes. This style of housekeeping struck me as a little odd. I mention it because household management is worthy of thought. A house is more than brick and mortar, wood or paint; this to me at least was. In its plainness it was a truthful reflection of its inmates: no disguises, no illusions, no make-believe here, but stern truth and solid, purpose breathed in all its arrangements. I was not long in company with the master of this house before I discovered that he was indeed the master of it, and likely to become mine too, if I staid long with him.



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He fulfilled St. Paul's idea of the head of the family – his wives believe in him, and his children observed him with reverence. Whenever he spoke, his words commanded earnest attention. His arguments which I ventured at some points to oppose, seemed to convince all, his appeals touched all, and his will impressed all. Certainly I never felt myself in the presence of a stronger religious influence than while in this house. "God and duty, God and duty," run like a thread of gold through all his utterances, and his family supplied a ready "Amen." In person he was lean and sinewy, of the best New England mould, built for times of trouble, fitted to grapple with the flintiest hardships. Clad in plain American woolen, shod in boots of cowhide leather, and wearing a cravat of the same substantial material, under six feet high, less than one hundred and fifty lbs. in weight, aged about fifty, he presented a figure straight and symmetrical as a mountain pine. His bearing was singularly impressive. His head was not large, but compact and high. His hair was coarse, strong, slightly gray and closely trimmed and grew close to his forehead. His face was smoothly shaved and revealed a strong square mouth, supported by a broad and prominent chin. His eyes were clear and grew, and in conversation they alternated with tears and fire. When on the street, he moved with a long springing, race-horse step, absorbed by his own reflections, neither seeking nor shunning observation. Such was the man whose name I heard uttered in whispers – such was the house in which he lived – such were family and household management – and such was Captain John Brown.

He said to me at this meeting, that he had invited me to his house for the especial purpose of laying before me his plan for the speedy emancipation of my race. He seemed to apprehend opposition on my part as he opened the subject and touched my vanity by saying, that he had observed my course at home and abroad, and wanted my co-operation. He said he had been for the last thirty years looking for colored men to whom he could safely reveal his secret, and had almost despaired, at times, of finding such, but that now he was encouraged for he saw heads rising up in all directions, to whom he thought he could with safety impart his plan. As this plan then lay in his mind it was very simple, and had much to commend it. It did not, as was supposed by many, contemplate a general rising among the slaves, and a general slaughter of the slave masters (an insurrection he thought would only defeat the object), but it did contemplate the creating of an armed force which should act in the very heart of the South. He was not averse to the shedding of blood, and thought the practice of carrying arms would be a good one for the colored people to adopt, as it would give them a sense of manhood. No people he said could have self-respect or be respected who would not fight for their freedom.



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He called my attention to a large map of the U. States, and pointed out to me the far-reaching Alleghanies, stretching away from the borders of New York into the Southern States. "These mountains," he said, "are the basis of my plan. God has given the strength of these hills to freedom; they were placed here to aid the emancipation of your race; they are full of natural forts, where one man for defense would be equal to a hundred for attack; they are also full of good hiding places where a large number of men could be concealed and baffle and elude pursuit for a long time. I know these mountains well and could take a body of men into them and keep them there in spite of all the efforts of Virginia to dislodge me, and drive me out. I would take at first about twenty-five picked men and begin on a small scale, supply them arms and ammunition, post them in squads of fives on a line of gathering recruits from the surrounding farms, seeking and selecting the most restless and daring." He saw that in this part of the work the utmost care must be used to guard against treachery and disclosure; only the most conscientious and skillful should be sent on this perilous duty. With care and enterprise he thought he could soon gather a force of one hundred hardy men, men who would be content to lead the free and adventurous life to which he proposed to train them. When once properly drilled and each had found the place for which he was best suited, they would begin work in earnest; they would run off the slaves in large numbers, retain the strong and brave ones in the mountains, and send the weak and timid ones to the North by the underground Rail-road; his operations would be enlarged with increasing numbers and would not be confined to one locality. Slave-holders should in some cases be approached at midnight and told to give up their slaves and to let them have their best horses to ride away upon. Slavery was a state of war, he said, to which the slaves were unwilling parties and consequently they had a right to anything necessary to their peace and freedom. He would shed no blood and would avoid a fight except in self-defense, when he would of course do his best. He believed this movement would weaken slavery in two ways-first by making slave property insecure, it would become undesirable; and secondly it would keep the anti-slavery agitation alive and public attention fixed upon it, and thus lead to the adoption of measures to abolish the evil altogether. He held that there was need of something startling to prevent the agitation of the question from dying out; that slavery had come near being abolished in Virginia by the Nat. Turner insurrection, and he thought his method would speedily put an end to it, both in Maryland and Virginia. The trouble was to get the right men to start with and money enough to equip them. He had adopted the simple and economical mode of living to which I have referred with a view to save money for this purpose. This was said in no boastful tone, for he felt that he had delayed already too long and had no room to boast either his zeal or his self-denial.



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From 8 o'clock in the evening till 3 in the morning, Capt. Brown and I sat face to face, he arguing in favor of his plan, and I finding all the objections I could against it. Now mark! this meeting of ours was full twelve years before the strike at Harpers Ferry. He had been watching and waiting all that time for suitable heads to rise or "pop up" as he said among the sable millions in whom he could confide; hence forty years had passed between his thought and his act. Forty years, though not a long time in the life of a nation, is a long time in the life of a man; and here forty long years, this man was struggling with this one idea; like Moses he was forty years in the wilderness. Youth, manhood, middle age had come and gone; two marriages had been consummated, twenty children had called him father; and through all the storms and vicissitudes of busy life, this one thought, like the angel in the burning bush, had confronted him with its blazing light, bidding him on to his work. Like Moses he had made excuses, and as with Moses his excuses were overruled. Nothing should postpone further what was to him his only apology for existence. He often said to me, though life was sweet to him, he would willingly lay it down for the freedom of my people; and on one occasion he added, that he had already lived about as long as most men, since he had slept less, and if he should now lay down his life the loss would not be great, for in fact he knew no better use for it.

Clearly, [Captain Brown](#) needed a support organization, a [Secret "Six."](#) if he was going to hope to provoke a 2d great American disunion on the scale of that initial great American disunion known as the "Revolutionary War," one that had placed enslavers in charge of our new nation.

[THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION](#)

December 8, Wednesday: [William Cooper Nell](#) was given 40 acres of land in upstate [New York](#) by [Gerrit Smith](#).¹¹



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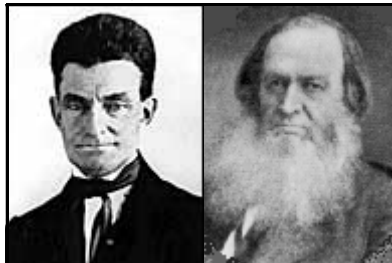
1848

[Amelia Bloomer](#) of 53 East Bayard Street in Seneca Falls NY married without promising to “obey.”

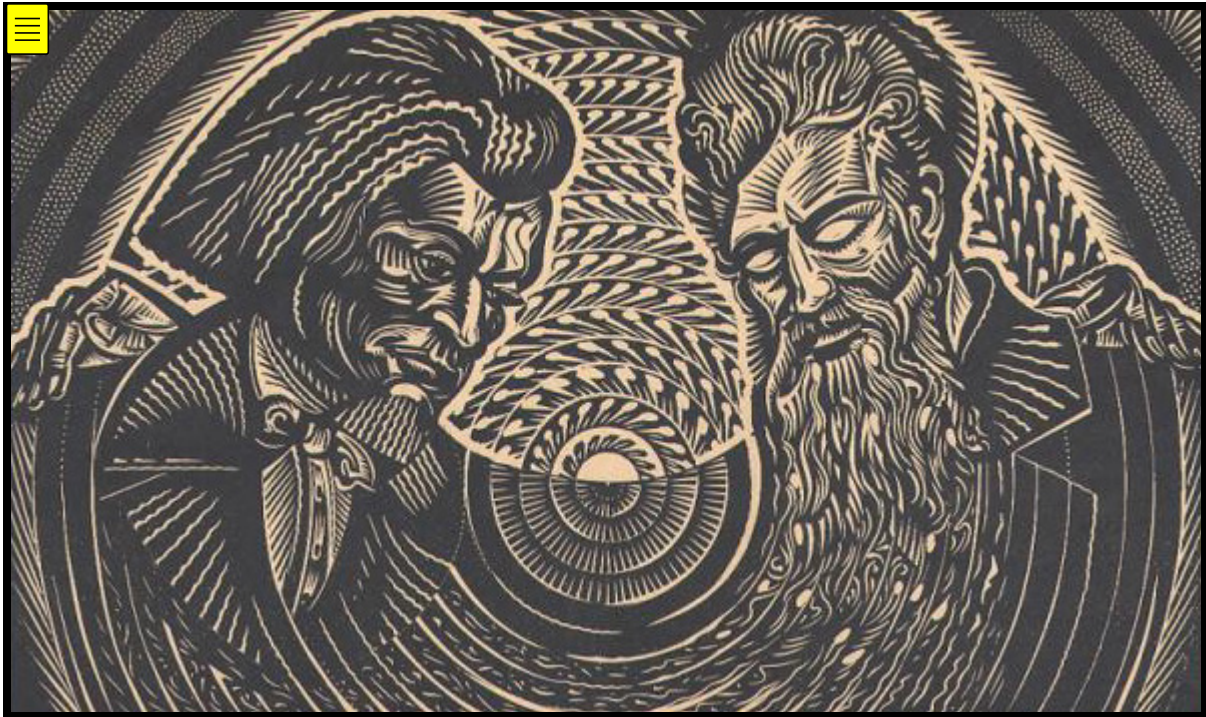
FEMINISM

There in Seneca Falls [Frederick Douglass](#) joined the crusade for women’s suffrage and attended the first Women’s Rights Convention. He perhaps had met [John Brown](#) (the American agitator, not either the British

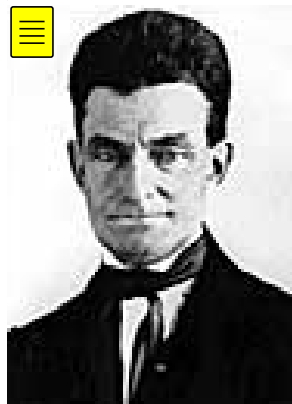
11. Abolitionist [Gerrit Smith](#) had been scheming to sell parcels of land on a 100,000-acre plot south of Lake Placid to black farmers, but this had come to nothing due not only to lack of capital among free blacks with which to purchase such land, but also to the entire infertility of the land being presented as farmable. (Fast-forward to [John Brown](#) at [North Elba](#).)



gentleman or the Concord businessman) for the 1st time as early as December 1847. Brown invited him to



stop, while Douglass was on his way home to Rochester from [Boston](#), and visit with the Brown family, which was at that time living in Springfield, Massachusetts. The two men were sizing up one another's usefulness.



According to an 1848 credit report, "his condition is questionable."

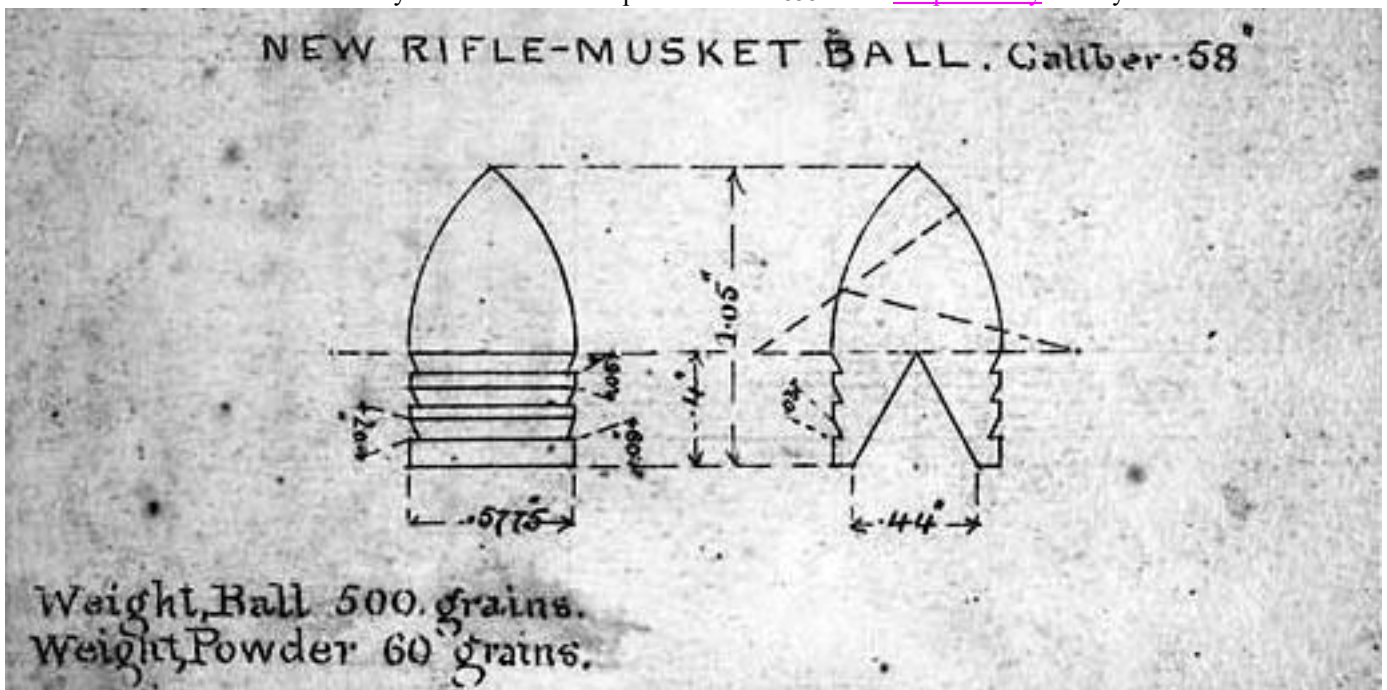
The American John Brown then departed for Europe, and would travel there for the remainder of this year and a good portion of 1849.

[John Buchanan Floyd](#) was reelected to the Virginia House of Delegates.

1849

The poet Richard Realf became at the age of 17, tending toward his adult height of 5 feet 5 inches, amanuensis to a lady in Brighton, England. When a lecturer on phrenology, passing through this beach resort town, recited some of his poems as instances of ideality, some of the literary people of the town began to patronize his talent. When Lady Byron sent him as steward to one of her country estates, he entangled himself in an affair with 57-year-old Anne Isabella "Annabella" Noel Byron (exiled by her husband George Gordon, Lord Byron in 1816). Living well beyond his means, wandering England indulging in freakish excesses, wearing a bracelet band of her bright hair, he contracted large debts and wound up in rags, barefoot, singing ballads, offering his hat as a target for pennies pitched by passers-by in the street.

Captain Claude Minié introduced a conical soft-lead bullet with a hollow base, the virtue of which was that it would expand inside a rifled barrel to make a gas-tight seal with the rifling. By permitting this better fit, range and accuracy, and therefore killing power, was greatly increased, while lead fouling and jamming of barrels during rapid fire was greatly decreased. In addition, the bullet would fragment into shrapnel in a salutary manner as it made its way through your flesh, thus transforming all rather than merely a portion of its inertial moment into tissue damage. (And they say there is no such thing as progress! This invention would serve well during the period 1862-1865, a period during which a great many wrong people lived who deserved to die a horrible death. To assist even the slightly wounded in dying this horrible death, the little hollow in the base of this "Minnie" was frequently contaminated by the righteous rifleman with fresh human feces.) Here is how this deadly device would be implemented in 1855 at the Harpers Ferry armory:



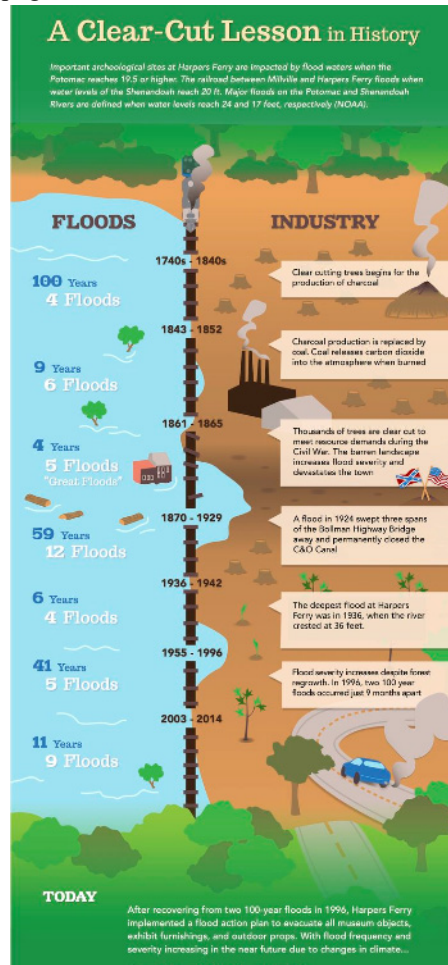
The federal arsenal was being beset by chronic flooding, but of course at the time no one had the slightest clue



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

that this flooding was anthropogenic and would become more and more a chronic condition:



Beset by his 2d business failure, almost age 50, at this point [John Brown](#) made what was according to David Grimsted “his first sustained effort to help blacks,” by moving his family onto [Gerrit Smith](#)’s donation tract in the Adirondacks south of Lake Placid near [North Elba](#) where they could live near and give advice and counsel to black families. Grimsted charges that the folks who talk about Brown as committing his life to antislavery activism as of 1837 are placing too great emphasis upon mere pronouncements and intentions, “vague dreams” as Grimsted characterizes them — if these historians are indeed not committing the egregious error to be described as “remembering backward.” In fact although Brown had aided individuals on occasion prior to this move, and although he had opposed racial segregation in the churches attended by his family, this was the first real activism of his life.



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(I don't know whether the family of [John Brown](#) relocated to North Elba while he was still in Europe, or upon his return late in the year.)

At any rate, in this year [John Buchanan Floyd](#) was becoming governor of Virginia. As governor he would distinguish himself by proposing to retaliate, by placing a special tax on their products, against any state whose courts failed to be adequately enthusiastic in helping Virginians to recapture their escaping black slaves (this would be, you notice, in direct violation of Article IV, Section 1 of the US Constitution, the "Full Faith and Credit Clause" which ensures that decisions of state courts are recognized and honored in all states).

February 5, Monday: [Eugène Labaume](#) died in the Beauchamp area near Pont-Saint-Esprit, France.

[John Brown, Jr.](#) wrote from Springfield, Massachusetts to his father [John Brown](#):

Dear Father,
I write you at this time more because you said in your last that you "love letters more now than ever before," than on account of anything I have to write. We are here all middling well, except our youngest child, who has been quite feeble since last fall. Owen's arm seems to be improving slowly. We have been selling wool middling fast of late, on contract, at 1847 prices. We have in this part of the country the strongest proofs that the great majority have made gold their hope, their only hope. I think that almost every product of industry will soon become high, from the fact alone that such a vast number of those who have hitherto been producers will cease to be so, and hereafter, for a time at least, be only consumers. I am inclined to think that persons who are in debt, and who hold any property of value, are likely to have a most favorable time to get out of debt. Would it not be well to have the word go round amongst all the



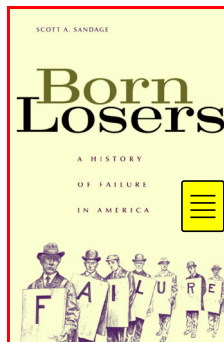
RACE WAR,

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Browns, that they may get ready to sell off enough of something to pay all debts? I really wish that Oliver and Frederick would take the hint, and when things get up (which I feel confident they will do), go at once to selling off and paying up. There is no way of making money so easy as by selling when every one wants to buy. It may cost us some little sacrifice of feeling at first, but would open a new world almost, if thoroughly done. I have felt a good deal of anxiety about the injury you received on your way home; was glad to hear that you was in any measure comfortable. I did not intend to put off writing so long but I always find it exceedingly hard work to write when I have nothing to communicate that is worth as much as the paper and postage. Your letters are not of so barren a character; so that we shall not expect you to pay the postage when you write, which we hope will be often. Your affectionate but unworthy son,
John Brown.

Winter: There was some doubt as to [John Brown](#)'s financial solidity:

A failed surveyor, farmer, speculator, schoolteacher, tanner, and cattleman, he showed up as a wool dealer in an 1848 credit report: "his condition is questionable." Winter 1849: "may or may not be good." Summer 1850: "his means are equally obscure." Still in his forties, he looked sixty to credit reporters. The agency lost him when he switched lines of work yet again, only to fail yet again. Like many another misfit who pushed a doomed venture too far, he quit when he had no other choice. Having grown whiskers for the first time, his craggy face looked still more ancient. Everyone had an opinion of this broken man. "Served him right." Overhearing such comments, Thoreau said he felt proud even to know him and questioned why people "talk as if a man's death were a failure, and his continued life, be it of whatever character, were a success." The bankrupt court had restored this loser's freedom in 1842. Now it was 1859, and no earthly court could save John Brown after his failure at Harpers Ferry.





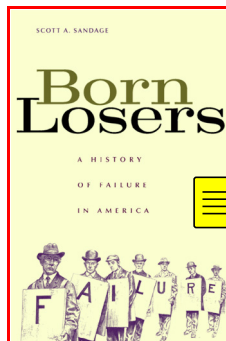
RACE WAR,

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1850

Summer: There was continued doubt as to [John Brown](#) of North Elba, [New York](#)'s financial solidity:

A failed surveyor, farmer, speculator, schoolteacher, tanner, and cattleman, he showed up as a wool dealer in an 1848 credit report: "his condition is questionable." Winter 1849: "may or may not be good." Summer 1850: "his means are equally obscure." Still in his forties, he looked sixty to credit reporters. The agency lost him when he switched lines of work yet again, only to fail yet again. Like many another misfit who pushed a doomed venture too far, he quit when he had no other choice. Having grown whiskers for the first time, his craggy face looked still more ancient. Everyone had an opinion of this broken man. "Served him right." Overhearing such comments, Thoreau said he felt proud even to know him and questioned why people "talk as if a man's death were a failure, and his continued life, be it of whatever character, were a success." The bankrupt court had restored this loser's freedom in 1842. Now it was 1859, and no earthly court could save John Brown after his failure at Harpers Ferry.



He brought his Devon cattle to the Agricultural Fair of Essex County:

The appearance upon the grounds of a number of very choice and beautiful Devons, from the herd of Mr. John Brown, residing in one of our most remote and secluded towns, attracted great attention, and added much to the interest of the Fair. The interest and admiration they excited have attracted public attention to the subject, and has already resulted in the introduction of several choice animals into this region. We have no doubt but that this influence upon the character of the stock



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of our county will be permanent and decisive.



IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THAT IT IS MORTALS WHO CONSUME OUR HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS, FOR WHAT WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO DO IS EVADE THE RESTRICTIONS OF THE HUMAN LIFESPAN. (IMMORTALS, WITH NOTHING TO LIVE FOR, TAKE NO HEED OF OUR STORIES.)



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

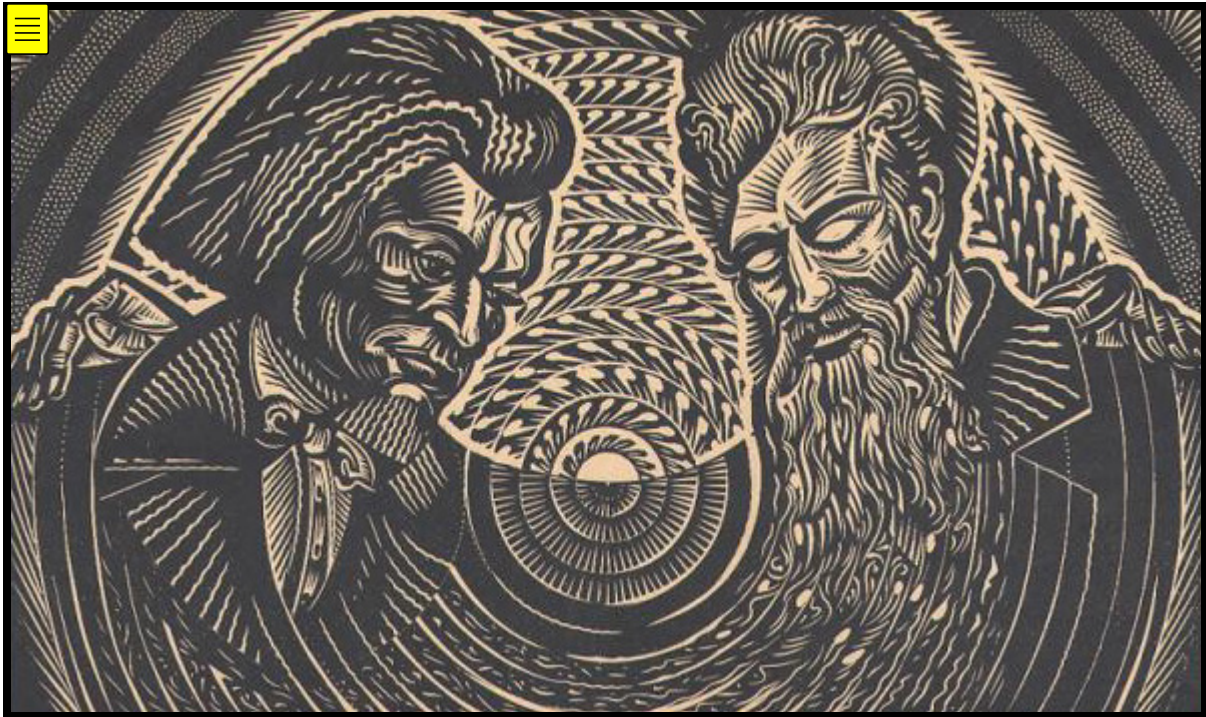
October 4, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Ellery Channing](#) returned from [Canada](#):

We left Montreal Wednesday, the 2d of October [this can only be an inaccurate transcription from notes, for our pair of intrepid travelers had left Montréal **for Québec** on Wednesday the 2d, and they were leaving Montréal **for home** on **Friday the 4th**, and there is simply no way to reconstrue their reported travels and adventures into 8 days rather than 10], late in the afternoon. In the La Prairie cars the Yankees made themselves merry, imitating the cries of the charette-drivers to perfection, greatly to the amusement of some French-Canadian travellers, and they kept it up all the way to Boston. I saw one person on board the boat at St. John's, and one or two more elsewhere in Canada, wearing homespun gray great-coats, or capotes, with conical and comical hoods, which fell back between their shoulders like small bags, ready to be turned up over the head when occasion required, though a hat usurped that place now. They looked as if they would be convenient and proper enough as long as the coats were new and tidy, but would soon come to have a beggarly and unsightly look, akin to rags and dust-holes. We reached Burlington early in the morning, where the Yankees tried to pass off their Canada coppers, but the news-boys knew better. Returning through the Green Mountains, I was reminded that I had not seen in Canada such brilliant autumnal tints as I had previously seen in Vermont. Perhaps there was not yet so great and sudden a contrast with the summer heats in the former country as in these mountain valleys. As we were passing through Ashburnham, by a new white house which stood at some distance in a field, one passenger exclaimed, so that all in the car could hear him, "There, there's not so good a house as that in all Canada!" I did not much wonder at his remark, for there is a neatness, as well as evident prosperity, a certain elastic easiness of circumstances, so to speak, when not rich, about a New England house, as if the proprietor could at least afford to make repairs in the spring, which the Canadian houses do not suggest. Though of stone, they are not better constructed than a stone barn would be with us; the only building, except the château, and while every village here contains at least several gentlemen or "squires," *there* there is but one to a seignior.

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It was [Frederick Douglass](#)'s speech at [Faneuil Hall](#) on this evening that prompted the formation of the Boston



Vigilance Committee, which eventually would spawn the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy in support of the activities of Captain [John Brown](#),¹² with the Boston attorney [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) providing it with legal counsel.



[Frederick Douglass](#) declared bravely, in accordance with the Southern code of honor which equated **willingness to abandon life** with **deservingness of freedom**,¹³ that "I should welcome the intelligence

12. (Of course, this was Captain Brown's conspiracy, since he was a white man and therefore a leader, and not [Frederick Douglass](#)'s conspiracy, since he was a black man and therefore a follower — despite the fact that while said conspiracy was being hatched [John Brown](#) was residing in the spare bedroom of Douglass's home in Rochester NY! :-)



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tomorrow, should it come, that slaves had risen in the South, and that the sable arms which had been engaged in beautifying and adorning the South, were engaged in spreading death and devastation.”

(Of course, although the idea of the raid on [Harpers Ferry](#) happened to be hatched while Brown was residing in Douglass’s spare bedroom, the idea of the raid was obviously all the white man’s idea and obviously none of the colored man’s idea, since we all know that colored people are not either originative or possessed of leadership capabilities. ;-)



A Vigilance Committee was also forming on this day in Syracuse, New York. It was made up of:

- P.H. Agan
- George Barnes
- Abnr. Bates
- Lyman Clary
- C.W. Levenworth
- J.W. Loguen
- H. Putnam
- R.R. Raymond
- C.B. Sedgwick
- V.W. Smith
- John Thomas
- C.A. Wheaton
- John Wilkinson

13. Cf the slavemaster Patrick Henry’s often-quoted “patriotic” declaration before the Virginia House of Burgesses, “I know not what course others may take, but as for me, Give Me Liberty Or Give Me Death.”



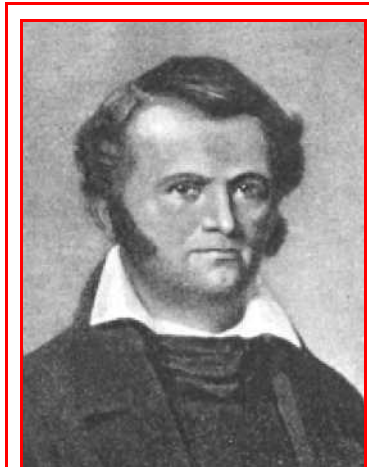
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Under the pressure of the Fugitive Slave Law, the “nonresistant” [Henry C. Wright](#) eventually came –surprise, surprise– to legitimate violence. No more Mr. Nice Guy:



Every man, who believes resistance to tyrants to be obedience to God, is bound by his **own principles** (not by mine) to arm himself with a pistol or a dirk, a bowie-knife, a rifle, or any deadly weapon, and inflict death with his own hand, on each and ever man who shall attempt to execute the recent law of Congress, or any other law, made with a view to re-capture and return to bondage fugitive slaves.



James Bowie



RACE WAR,

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1851

[Richard Josiah Hinton](#) came from England to America, and took up residence in New-York City. There he would learn the printer's trade and then become a newspaper reporter for several different newspapers in New-York and Boston.

James Newton Gloucester was born to [Elizabeth A. Parkhill Gloucester](#) and [the Reverend James Newton Gloucester](#) (he would die during 1930).

A revolution in railroad construction was accomplished, the Bollman Bridge at [Harpers Ferry](#) — an all-metal

HDT

WHAT?

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HISTORY OF RR

truss that should have been capable of supporting more than one ton of self-manumitting slaves per linear foot.



Harpers Ferry VA from Captain John Brown's overlook in Maryland

JOHN BROWN

BRIDGE DESIGN



RACE WAR,

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January 15, Wednesday: Mariano Arista Luna replaced José Joaquín Antonio Florencio de Herrera y Ricardos as President of [Mexico](#).

In reaction to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, [John Brown](#) organized 44 people of Springfield, Massachusetts to resist the federal bounty hunters as the “United States League of Gileadites,” 17 whose names are no longer of record, and the following list of 27, which includes three or possibly four women:

- Joseph Addams
- John Brown
- William Burns
- Samuel Chandler
- B.C. Dowling
- Jane Fowler
- A.C. Gazam
- William Gordon
- Eliza Green
- William Green
- Henry Hector
- G.W. Holmes
- J.N. Howard
- Ann Johnson
- Henry Johnson
- Reverdy Johnson
- H.J. Jones
- William H. Montague
- Charles Odell
- Henry Robinson
- Charles Rollins
- John Smith
- John Strong
- Cyrus Thomas
- L. Wallace
- Scipio Webb
- Jane Wicks

The oath they swore was to “Stand by one another and by your friends while a drop of blood remains; and be hanged if you must, but tell no tales out of school.”

May 29, Thursday: The Worcester [Spy](#) was keeping its eye peeled for the more daring ladies:

The New Costume.

The first Bloomer made its appearance in our city yesterday.



SAMUEL JOSEPH MAY

At the Berry Street Conference in Boston, debate began over the Reverend May's resolution condemning [Daniel Webster](#), Millard Fillmore, [Edward Everett](#), Samuel A. Eliot, the Reverend Professor [Jared Sparks](#), the Reverend Ezra Stiles Gannett, and the Reverend Orville Dewey as "traffickers IN HUMAN FLESH." May charged that Gannett was acting in a manner "utterly subversive of Christian morality and of all true allegiance to God." The question became how much the Federal Union was worth, compared with for instance the Laws of God. The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) rose to assert that if and when [George Ticknor Curtis](#), a member of the Reverend Gannett's Unitarian assembly and an officer charged with local administration of the Fugitive Slave Law, came to his parsonage to take a black fugitive from slavery into custody, he would defend not only with an open Bible but with the sword, the brace of pistols, and the musket which his father had carried at Lexington Green on April 19, 1775. → He was, he declared, no "foolish nonresistant," and one wonders whether he would have had that "open Bible" open to one or another of the same Old Testament passages that would be firmly underlined, while in prison awaiting execution, by Captain [John Brown](#) in 1859. → This controversy would not be over until 1853, → and when it was concluded, it was concluded by instructions to Unitarian ministers that the debate over slavery was driving away potential converts to Unitarianism, and that therefore they should avoid discussion of the peculiar institution of slavery, avoid discussion of Webster, and avoid discussion of the merits of the Fugitive Slave Law — and that those unable to avoid such discussion would be find themselves no longer recognized as Unitarian ministers.

At the Woman's Rights Convention in Akron, [Ohio](#), the letter of May 20th from [Henry C. Wright](#) was read:

FLUSHING, Long Island, May 20, 1851.
 TO THE WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION.
 Dear Friends;—
 * * *

The effort being made by yourselves and others to secure to woman her rights as a human being, and her true position in reference to the customs and institutions of society, ought to be, and ere long will be, regarded as one of the most important movements



RACE WAR,

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of the age. It involves all that is pure, elevating and endearing in domestic life; all that is lovely, good and great in social life; all that is useful and enduring in religious and social institutions. The abolition of intemperance, war, slavery, and all the individual and social wrongs of mankind, and the regeneration and redemption of the race from the physical, intellectual, social and moral evils that now crush it, must be associated with this movement. I see not how any being, whose destiny is linked with that of human-kind, can treat this subject lightly, or remain indifferent to it.

Man and Woman cannot be separated in their destiny. Where woman goes, man must go; where man goes, woman must go; as the one rises or sinks in intelligence, in wisdom and virtue, so must the other rise or fall.

* * *

Man cannot be saved without the aid of woman; woman cannot be saved without the aid of man. United in love, in counsel and effort, progress in wisdom and goodness, towards the heavenly and divine, is certain; disunited in affection, in interest, in plans or in their execution, degradation and ruin must follow. This should be settled as a fixed fact in the minds of all who take part in this movement.

* * *

Whatever right of property or person, of government or religion; in the family, in the market, in the church, the court, the cabinet, legislative hall, or in the public assembly, belongs to man, belongs also to woman. In arranging and conducting the affairs of life in regard to our domestic, pecuniary, social, religious and civil concerns, this fact is denied or disregarded. To enlighten the understanding and consciences of men, and to arouse their moral nature in regard to this great law of our being, should be one great aim of all who are interested in this enterprise. In asserting your Humanity, you assert the fact that whatever right belongs to one human being, belongs to each and every one, without regard to sex, complexion, condition, caste or country. Woman is a human being; and it is a self-evident truth that whatever right belongs to man by virtue of his membership in the human family, belongs to her by the same tenure. This truth is not to be reasoned about; it is self-evident. No power in the universe can have the right to put woman in a position of subjection to man, or man in subjection to woman. As regards their relations to each other, they are equals; and neither can justly be held responsible, as subject to any power but the Divine. It is not right or expedient to submit this question to the contingency of a discussion, for you could not submit it if the decision were against you. Why appeal to a tribunal at all, whose decision, in this matter you have determined not to abide by, if it is against you? To do so would be neither dignified nor honest.

Dear friends, permit me to remind you not to be disheartened though few join you. There are tens of thousands interested in



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this movement who have not courage to become a part of it. Be more anxious to plant yourselves on the rock of eternal truth, and to abide there, than to increase your numbers. Truth goes not by numbers, but is instinct with divine life, and it must triumph.

* * *

May truth, in regard to the rights and position of woman, and to her connexion with the true development and destiny of our nature, be your aim, and uncompromising fidelity to that truth, your endeavor.

Yours truly,
HENRY C. WRIGHT





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BIGELOW

May 29: It is evident that the virtues of plants are almost completely unknown to us— And we esteem the few with which we are better acquainted unreasonably above the many which are comparatively unknown to us. Bigelow says —“It is a subject of some curiosity to consider, if the knowledge of the present *Materia Medica* were by any means to be lost, how many of the same articles would again rise into notice and use. Doubtless a variety of new substances would develop unexpected powers, while perhaps the poppy would be shunned as a deleterious plant, and the cinchona might grow unmolested upon the mountains of Quito.”

BIGELOW

Sawyer regards *Nux vomica* among the most valuable.

B. says 1817 “We have yet to discover our anodynes & our emetics, although we abound in bitters, astringents, aromatics, and demulcents. In the present state of our knowledge we could not well dispense with opium and *ipicacuanha*, yet a great number of foreign drugs, such as gentian, columbo, chamomile, kino, catechu, *cascarilla*, *canella*, &c. for which we pay a large annual tax to other countries, might in all probability be superceded by the indigenous products of our own. It is certainly better that our own country people should have the benefit of collecting such articles, than that we should pay for them to the Moors of Africa, or the Indians of Brazil.”

The Thorn apple *Datura stramonium* (Apple of Peru —Devil’s Apple —Jamestown Weed) “emigrates with great facility, and often springs up in the ballast of ships, and in earth carried from one country to another.” It secretes itself in the hold of vessels —& migrates —it is a sort of cosmopolitan weed —a roving weed —what adventures—

What historian knows when first it came into a country!

He quotes Beverly’s *Hist. of Virginia* as saying that some soldiers in the days of Bacon’s rebellion —having eaten some of this plant —which was boiled for salad by mistake —were made natural fools & buffoons by it for 11 days, without injury to their bodies??

BIGELOW

The root of a biennial or perennial will accumulate the virtues of the plant more than any other part.

B says that Pursh states that the sweetscented Golden Rod *Solidago odora* “has for some time (i.e. before 1817) been an article of exportation to China, where it fetches a high price.” And yet it is known to very few New Englanders.

BIGELOW

“No botanist, says B. even if in danger of starving in a wilderness, would indulge his hunger on a root or fruit taken from an unknown plant of the natural order *Luridae*, of the *Multisiliquae*, or the *umbelliferous aquatics*. On the contrary he would not feel a moment’s hesitation in regard to any of the *Gramina*, the fruit of the *Pomaceae*, and several other natural families of plants, which are known to be uniformly innocent in their effects”

GINSENG

The aromatic flavor of the Checquer Berry is also perceived in the *Gaultheria hispidula*; in *Spiraea ulmaria* and the root of *Spiraea lobata* —and in the birches.

He says Ginseng, *Spigelia*, Snake-root, &c. form considerable articles of exportation.

The odor of Skunk cabbage is perceived in some N.A. currants —as *Ribes rigens* of MX on high *mts*—

At one time the Indians above Quebec & Montreal were so taken up with searching for Ginseng that they could not be hired for any other purpose. It is said that both the Chinese & the Indians named this plant from its resemblance to the figure of a man

BIGELOW

The Indians used the bark of *Dirca palustris* or Leather Wood for their cordage. It was after the long continued search of many generations that these qualities were discovered.

Of Tobacco, *Nicotiana Tabacum*, B. says after speaking of its poisonous qualities “Yet the first person who had courage & patience enough to persevere in its use, until habit had overcome his original disgust, eventually found in it a pleasing sedative, a soother of care, and a material addition to the pleasures of life. Its use, which originated among savages, has spread into every civilized country; it has made its way against the declamations of the learned, and the prohibitions of civil & religious authority, and it now gives rise to an extensive branch of agriculture, or of commerce, in every part of the globe.”

Soon after its introduction into Europe —“The rich indulged in it as a luxury of the highest kind; and the poor gave themselves up to it, as a solace for the miseries of life.”

BIGELOW

Several varieties are cultivated.

In return for many foreign weeds we have sent abroad, says B. “The *Erigeron Canadense* & the prolific families

RACE WAR,

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of Ambrosia & Amaranthus.”



“The Indians were acquainted with the med. properties of more than one species of Euphorbia”

Night shade is called bitter sweet.

Poke also called Garget

V root of Arum Triphyllum –Dragon Root or Ind. turnip

V Gold Thread Coptis trifolia

V sanguinaria Canadensis or Blood Root

V Conium Maculatum Hemlock

V Cicuta maculata Am. Hemlock

V Asarum Canadense Wild Ginger snake root–colt’s foot–

V Hyoscyamus Niger Henbane

V sweetscented Golden rod

V Panax quinquefolium Ginseng.

V Polygala Senega Seneca snake root

V veratrum viride Am. Hellebore

V Dirca palustris Leather Wood.

GINSENG

I noticed the button bush May 25th around an elevated pond or mudhole –its leaves just beginning to expand–

This slight amount of green contrasted with its –dark craggly naked looking stem & branches –as if subsiding waters had left them bare –looked Dantesque –& infernal. It is not a handsome bush at this season it is so slow to put out its leaves & hide its naked & unsightly stems.



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The *Andromeda ligustrina* is late to leave out.

malus excelsa –amara –florida –palustris –gratissima –ramosa –spinosa ferruginea –aromatica –aurea –rubigenosa –odorata –tristis –officinalis!! herbacea –vulgaris –aestivalis –autumnalis riparia –odora –versicolor –communis –farinosa –super septa pendens malus sepium virum Nov. Angliae –succosa saepe formicis preoccupata –vermiculosa aut verminosa –aut a vermibus corrupta vel erosa –Malus semper virens et viridis viridis –cholera –morbifera or dysenterifera –(M. sylvestrispaludosa –excelsa et ramosa superne –difficilis conscendere (aut adoepere), fructus difficillimus stringere –parvus et amara.) Picis perforata or perterebata –rupestris –agrestis –arvensis –Assabetia –Railroad apple –Musketaquidensis –dew apple rorifera. The apple whose fruit we tasted in our youth which grows passim et nusquam,– Our own particular apple malus numquam legata vel stricta. (Malus cujus fructum ineunte aetate gustavi quae passim et nusquam viget) cortice muscosâ Malus viae-ferreae



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

1852

A photograph was taken of Arrowhead, that is now on a postcard which you can purchase there. Many things in this photograph are different from what appears today. Plowed fields were coming right up to the lawn, the trees were small, and you can see a large working barn set away from the house.

The Refugee Slaves' Friends Society was founded by Elias Smith Adams (July 15, 1799-December 24, 1863) as a relief organization in [St. Catharines](#), Ontario, [Canada West](#). It consisted of 70 members. Members would include [Harriet Tubman](#), William Hamilton Merritt, and Colonel John Clark.

In this year [Frederick Douglass](#) had at least one Daguerreotype (presumably, many) made:¹⁴



According to [Wendell Phillips](#), Douglass had been so influenced by [John Brown](#) that, at one point during a anti-slavery meeting in Boston's toney Faneuil Hall,





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he had advocated that the slaves of the South had

no possible hope except in their own right arms.

He was thus standing to commit the Biblical error of “trying to hold Eloah in one’s fist.” But [Sojourner Truth](#)

14. You will note that, since this is a Daguerreotype, it presents a mirror image and it would thus appear to us now, who have become accustomed to positive photographs made from negatives, as if the subject had parted his hair on the right. The photo was recently disposed of at a Sotheby’s auction upon an bid of \$184,000 by an anonymous telephone participant.



“Everything in life is unusual until you get accustomed to it.”

— The Scarecrow, in THE MARVELOUS LAND OF OZ
(L. Frank Baum, 1904)



was sitting in the front row listening to this. As Douglass was finishing, Truth called out

FREDERICK! IS GOD DEAD?



Debating Holding One's God in One's Fist

[Frederick Douglass](#) did not necessarily appreciate such treatment or benefit from this correction; he would refer to [Sojourner Truth](#) as one “who seemed to feel it her duty to trip me up in my speeches and to ridicule my efforts to speak and act like a person of cultivation and refinement.”

Was Truth seconding the puerile [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) sentiment found in his biography of [Franklin Pierce](#), that when it be God's will, then will human slavery “vanish like a dream” without anybody needing to lift their little finger? Nope, Sojourner knew that slavery was not a dream that would vanish like a dream.

The interesting fact about these two apparently identical attitudes, that of [Hawthorne](#) and that of [Truth](#), is that they are as diametrically opposed as black and white. Although the two might be made to appear similar in outline in poor light, on the basis of their shared vocabulary of God-talk, in fact were we to ask the powerful beneficiaries of injustice to trust in God to correct wrongs being done by them, this would be the **opposite** of our asking the powerless victims of injustice to trust in God to correct wrongs being done to them. The difference, which makes these two situations opposite, is that a powerful beneficiary of injustice has no basis for relying on his or her own judgment, since such a judgment is and must be inherently merely self-serving.

Note that [Hawthorne](#)'s position was compatible with the vengeance of the strong against the weak, merely enabling this vengeance to continue, whereas [Truth](#)'s position was incompatible with the vengeance of the weak against the strong, preventing it from beginning. In the case of the powerful, what trusting in God to correct wrongs leads to is violence and more violence and the perpetuation of violence, whereas in the case of the powerless, this leads only to: **decency and more decency.**¹⁵

15. Ask yourself what [Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi](#) would have said to [Hawthorne](#), and what he would have said to [Truth](#). — What the Reverend [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#) would have said. — What [Henry Thoreau](#) would have said (had Hawthorne had enough respect for his neighbor to walk a mile and ask for advice).

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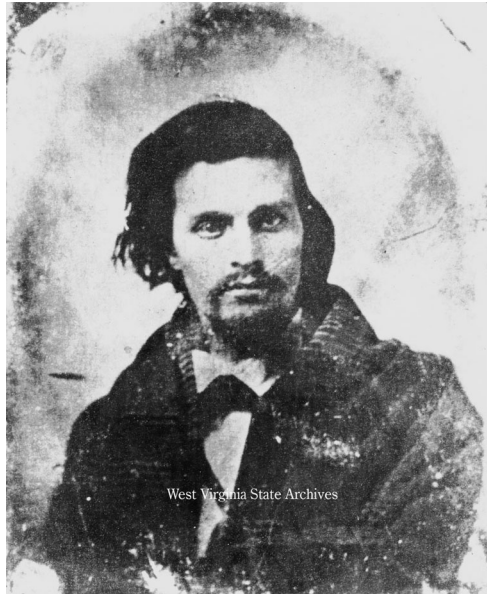
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His term as Governor of Virginia having expired, [John Buchanan Floyd](#) resumed the practice of law in Abingdon, Virginia.

[Richard Realf](#) put out a collection of poetry in Brighton and London, GUESSES AT THE BEAUTIFUL.



GUESSES AT THE BEAUTIFUL

The Children.

Do you love me, little children.
O sweet blossoms that are curled
(Life's tender morning-glories)
'Round the casement of the world!
Do your hearts climb up toward me.
As my own heart bends to you.
In the beauty of your dawning
And the brightness of your dew?

When the fragrance of your faces
And the rhythm of your feet,
And the incense of your voices
Transform the sullen street.
Do you see my soul move softly
Forever where you move,
With an eye of benediction
And a guarding hand of love?

O my darlings! I am with you
In your troubles, in your play;
In your sobbing and your singing.
In your dark and in your day;
In the chambers where you nestle,
In the hovels where you lie,
In the sunlight where you blossom
And the blackness where you die.



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Not a blessing broods above you
But it lifts me from the ground;
Not a thistle-barb doth sting you
But I suffer with the wound;
And a chord within me trembles
To your lightest touch or tone,
And I famish when you hunger
And I shiver when you moan.

* * * *

I have trodden all the spaces
Of my solemn years alone,
And have never felt the cooing
Of a babe's breath near my own;
But with more than father passion,
And with more than mother pain,
I have loved you, little children;—
Do you love me back again?

Hymn of Pittsburgh.

My father was a mighty Vulcan;
I am Smith of the land and sea;
The cunning spirit of Tubal-Cain
Came with my marrow to me.
I think great thoughts, strong-winged with steel,
I coin vast iron acts,
And orb the impalpable dreams of seers
Into comely, lyric facts.

I am monarch of all the forges,
I have solved the riddle of fire;
The amen of nature to cry of man
Answers at my desire.
I search with the subtle soul of flame
The heart of the rocky earth,
And hot from my anvils the prophecies
Of the miracle-years leap forth.

I am swart with the soot of my furnace,
I drip with the sweats of toil;
My fingers throttle the savage wastes,
I tear the curse from the soil;
I fling the bridges across the gulfs
That hold us from the to-be
And build the roads for the bannered march
Of crowned humanity.

De Mortuis Nil Nisi Bonum.

When for me this end has come and I am dead,
and the little voluble, chattering daws of men
peck at me curiously, let it then be said
by some one brave enough to speak the truth:
Here lies a great soul killed by cruel wrong.
Down all the balmy days of his fresh youth
to his bleak, desolate noon, with sword and song,
and speech that rushed up hotly from the heart,

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he wrought for liberty, till his own wound
(he had been stabbed), concealed with painful art
through wasting years, mastered him, and he swooned,
and sank there where you see him lying now
with the word 'Failure' written on his brow.

But say that he succeeded. If he missed
world's honors, and world's plaudits, and the wage
of the world's deft lacqueys, still his lips were kissed
daily by those high angels who assuage
the thirstings of the poets— for he was
born unto singing— and a burthen lay
mightily on him, and he moaned because
he could not rightly utter to the day
what God taught in the night. Sometimes, nathless,
power fell upon him, and bright tongues of flame,
and blessings reached him from poor souls in stress;
and benedictions from black pits of shame,
and little children's love, and old men's prayers,
and a Great Hand that led him unawares.

So he died rich. And if his eyes were blurred
with big films— silence! he is in his grave.
Greatly he suffered, greatly, too, he erred;
yet broke his heart trying to be brave.
Nor did he wait till Freedom had become
the popular shibboleth of courtier's lips;
he smote for her when God Himself seemed dumb
and all His arching skies were in eclipse.
He was a-weary, but he fought his fight,
and stood for simple manhood; and was joyed
to see the august broadening of the light
and new earths heaving heavenward from the void.
He loved his fellows, and their love was sweet—
plant daisies at his head and at his feet.



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In London, [Lajos Kossuth](#) became an intimate of [Giuseppe Mazzini](#), and joined his revolutionary committee.

[ITALY](#)

[Thomas Mayne Reid, Jr.](#)'s THE YOUNG VOYAGEURS; OR, THE BOY HUNTERS IN THE NORTH. The author engaged in a plan for [Kossuth](#) to travel incognito across Europe as his man-servant "James Hawkins" under a Foreign Office passport "for the free passage of Captain Mayne Reid, British subject, travelling on the Continent with a man-servant."

In [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE (initially being issued in London by Chapman and Hall as 2 volumes octavo in blind-stamped brown cloth with spines lettered in gilt, prior to being printed in America) there was talk of the reading of [THE DIAL](#):

Being much alone, during my recovery, I read interminably [page 677] in Mr. Emerson's Essays, the Dial, Carlyle's works, George Sand's romances, (lent me by Zenobia,) and other books which one or another of the brethren or sisterhood had brought with them. Agreeing in little else, most of these utterances were like the cry of some solitary sentinel, whose station was on the outposts of the advance-guard of human progression; or, sometimes, the voice came sadly from among the shattered ruins of the past, but yet had a hopeful echo in the future. They were well adapted (better, at least, than any other intellectual products, the volatile essence of which had heretofore tintured a printed page) to pilgrims like ourselves, whose present bivouac was considerably farther into the waste of chaos than any mortal army of crusaders had ever marched before. Fourier's works, also, in a series of horribly tedious volumes, attracted a good deal of my attention, from the analogy which I could not but recognize between his system and our own. There was far less resemblance, it is true, than the world chose to imagine; inasmuch as the two theories differed, as widely as the zenith from the nadir, in their main principles.



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There was also talk of the reading of [Waldo Emerson](#)'s essays:

Being much alone, during my recovery, I read interminably [page 677] in Mr. Emerson's Essays, the Dial, Carlyle's works, George Sand's romances, (lent me by Zenobia,) and other books which one or another of the brethren or sisterhood had brought with them. Agreeing in little else, most of these utterances were like the cry of some solitary sentinel, whose station was on the outposts of the advance-guard of human progression; or, sometimes, the voice came sadly from among the shattered ruins of the past, but yet had a hopeful echo in the future. They were well adapted (better, at least, than any other intellectual products, the volatile essence of which had heretofore tintured a printed page) to pilgrims like ourselves, whose present bivouac was considerably farther into the waste of chaos than any mortal army of crusaders had ever marched before. Fourier's works, also, in a series of horribly tedious volumes, attracted a good deal of my attention, from the analogy which I could not but recognize between his system and our own. There was far less resemblance, it is true, than the world chose to imagine; inasmuch as the two theories differed, as widely as the zenith from the nadir, in their main principles.

At some point during this year the proud author sat for his portrait in the studio of G.P.A. Healy at West Street and Washington Street in Boston. His new book was in part about "the Juvenalian and Thoreauvian ideology of [Blithedale](#)," an experiment in community which was "in spite of its Edenic pretensions, located in an area of market gardens catering to the needs of the expanding 'New England metropolis'."



When "Wakefield" was published in 1836, most of Hawthorne's audience, like Hawthorne himself, would only have known of the conditions of urban life treated in the sketch by having read about them. Hawthorne takes advantage of the exoticism of a European metropolitan setting, just as Poe was to have done a few years later in "The Man of the Crowd" and "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." Yet by 1852, when THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE was published, the urbanization of American was no longer an abstract possibility; it was, thanks to economic growth, industrial development, and large-scale immigration, an increasingly insistent reality. The intellectual and social movements represented by the Blithedale community were, in large measure, a response to these historic changes. The process of urbanization is therefore never entirely out of sight in THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE. Expressing the ideas implicit in the agrarian experiment, Coverdale offers several standard Transcendentalist criticisms of urban life. Driving through the



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streets of Boston, he describes "how the buildings, on either side, seemed to press too closely upon us, insomuch that our mighty hearts found barely room enough to throb between them" (3:11). Observing how the snow falling upon the city is blackened by smoke, and molded by boots, Coverdale makes it into a metaphor for the way in which human nature is corrupted by the "falsehood, formality, and error" (3:11) of city life. In addition, Coverdale identifies cities as the sources of the "selfish competition," which powers the "weary treadmill of established society" (3:19). Yet, although Coverdale will occasionally express the Juvenalian and Thoreauvian ideology of Blithedale, he implicitly recognizes, late in the book, that it may be futile to attempt to arrest the advance of urban civilization. When he observes a crowd at a village lyceum, it seems to him to be "rather suburban than rural" (3:197). The decline of authentic rusticity has been implied earlier when we learn that Blithedale, in spite of its Edenic pretensions, is located in an area of market gardens catering to the needs of the expanding "New England metropolis." From the very beginning of THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE, we know that the utopian experiment has failed and that Coverdale has returned to the urban existence he originally fled.

During this year [Kossuth](#) was fundraising practically everywhere in America, including in the First Church at [Northampton](#). He had a letter of introduction to the Motts of Philadelphia, and they invited him to dinner at their home. The Governor's advisers insisted that he call there only for an informal chat while refraining from breaking bread with any such notorious abolitionists — lest news of such an indiscretion get out and he be embarrassed. During his visit and chat, [Friend Lucretia](#) somehow formed the opinion that although this politician was afraid to say so, in his heart he would have to be opposed to human slavery in any form. (Madam Pulzysky, Kossuth's sister, also visited the Motts, and by way of contrast she was willing to argue the advantages of human slavery with them.)

What sort of man was this Kossuth? Utterly ruthless. Cold-blooded murder was not beyond him, when the result would prove useful. When he had needed to safeguard the royal gems of Hungary, for instance, including the crown of St. Stephen which was held to be necessary for the coronation of any true king of Hungary, he had had them buried at a spot on the banks of the Danube, and he had employed for this work "a detachment of prisoners who were shot after the concealment was complete." His plot was that this portable property was to be recovered later, packed in marmalade, and carried via Constantinople to "the well-known Philhellene" of Boston, [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#). However, when it came to be time, during this year, to dig up the jewels and pack them in marmalade for shipment to Boston, the man whom he would entrust to do this would betray his trust. —Eventually the jewels, including the crown of St. Stephen, would come into the control of the government of Austria.

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Kossuth somehow suborned the cooperation of [William James Stillman](#) in his abortive scheme to recover the jewels, and this American artist sailed off to Hungary on this wild-goose chase.

According to page 153 and pages 161-6 of Larry J. Reynolds's influence study *EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE AMERICAN LITERARY RENAISSANCE* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1988), virtually everything about [Henry Thoreau](#) during this period is to be accounted for in terms of the manifold influences upon him and upon the times, of European revolutionaries such as [Kossuth](#) here:



Faced with this threat of mental contamination, our guy allegedly has become literally obsessed with maintaining his self-concept and his self-satisfaction:

[Thoreau](#), stirred by [Lajos Kossuth](#)'s visit and news of European affairs, returned to the manuscript of *WALDEN* and revised and expanded it throughout 1852. Although engaged by current events, Thoreau fought a spiritual battle to remain aloof, "to preserve the mind's chastity" by reading "not the Times" but "the Eternities." Imagining that he had won, he celebrated his victory in *WALDEN*.... Kossuth's visit to the United States and [Concord](#) brought to a head a struggle Thoreau had been engaged in for some time. During the years following the European revolutions of 1848-1849, Thoreau struggled to develop his spiritual side and rid himself of what he considered a degrading interest in current events. He also tried to communicate to [Waldo Emerson](#) and the world his own capacity for heroism. After the disappointing reception of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) in the summer of 1849, Thoreau had become uncertain about how to proceed with his life. Setting the third draft of *WALDEN* aside as unpublishable, he studied Hinduism, visited Cape Cod several times, took a trip to [Canada](#), and began his Indian book project. The next year, 1851, he started to focus his energies, and, as Lewis Leary has said, these twelve months were a watershed in his life, a time of consolidation, of self-discovery, of preparation for some important new effort. "I find myself uncommonly prepared for **some** literary work...", he wrote in his journal on September 7, 1851. "I am prepared not so much for contemplation, as for forceful expression." Subsequently, 1852 became Thoreau's *annus mirabilis*, the year his months of living deliberately yielded a value of its own, he lavished upon



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it the care and craft that turned it into his richest literary achievement; he also wrote at this time most of his essay "Life without Principle," which, as Walter Harding has observed, "contains virtually all the fundamental principles upon which he based his life"; and, more important, he radically revised and reshaped WALDEN, changing it from a factual account of his life in the woods into the embryo of a profound spiritual autobiography, illuminated by the idea of spiritual renewal, shaped and informed by the cycle of the seasons.

The catalyst for the metamorphosis of WALDEN was Thoreau's desire to resolve, in writing if not in fact, the conflict he felt between the spiritual and the animal in himself. On the one hand, his recent communion with nature had yielded, as it had in his youth, transcendence – not of the world of material fact, but rather of the world of trivial fact. At times he achieved a state of pure spirituality in the woods. On August 17, 1851, for example, he recorded in his journal, "My heart leaps into my mouth at the sound of the wind in the woods. I, whose life was but yesterday so desultory and shallow, suddenly recover my spirits, my spirituality, through my hearing.... I did not despair of worthier moods, and now I have occasion to be grateful for the flood of life that is flowing over me." At such times, he reexperienced the ecstasy of his youth, when, as he put it, "the morning and the evening were sweet to me, and I led a life aloof from society of men." Despite these experiences, which he valued greatly, another aspect of Thoreau's personality cared about society, cared passionately about justice, about the actions of governments, about the fate of actual men in the nineteenth century. This part of him, however, he associated with his impure animal nature, and he sought to purge it.

Thoreau had no way of knowing whether the body was Margaret Fuller's or not, but she was surely on his mind, and her endeavor to convince others of the legitimacy of her "title" may have been as well. His description, which obviously contrasts with his earlier one, reveals the power and significance the facts possessed in his eyes. Here as always he cared too much about the human to dismiss its annihilation with convincing disdain.

During the last months of 1850 and all of 1851, Thoreau dedicated himself to living deliberately, to fronting what he called the essential. During these months, he spent many hours walking through the fields and woods of Concord, recording his observations in his journal. At the same time, he read the newspapers and found himself engaged by what he found. The political news from Europe focused upon the failure of the republican movement, the reaction and reprisals, the futile attempts by exiles such as Mazzini and Kossuth to enlist aid in the struggle for a new round of upheavals. Austria, meanwhile, charged that the United States, especially its new Secretary of State Daniel Webster, was encouraging anti-Austrian sentiment and intruding in the affairs of Europe. On November 17, 1850,



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Thoreau revealed both his disdain for the news of the day and his concern about its power to capture his attention: "It is a strange age of the world this, when empires, kingdoms, and republics come a-begging to our doors and utter their complaints at our elbows. I cannot take up a newspaper but I find that some wretched government or other, hard pushed and on its last legs, is interceding with me, the reader, to vote for it, – more importunate than an [Italian](#) beggar." At times the newspapers contributed to the problem he called "the village," which kept him from getting to the woods in spirit, although he walked miles into it bodily. One way he tried to overcome this problem was through the process of diminution, which can be seen in the following outburst of May 1, 1851: "Nations! What are nations? Tartars! and Huns! and Chinamen! Like insects they swarm. The historian strives in vain to make them memorable. It is for want of a man that there are so many men." Quoting from "The Spirit of Lodin," ... he claims to "look down from my height on nations, / And they become ashes before me." By adopting an Olympian point of view, Thoreau elevates himself and diminishes men both in size and importance. Like [Waldo Emerson](#) in the "Mind and Manners" lectures, he also reaffirms his belief that the regeneration of the self, the building up of the single solitary soul, is far more important than the activities of masses of men, be they parties, tribes, or nations.

Throughout 1851, as Thoreau continued to read the papers, he developed a loathing for them linked to that part of himself unable to ignore them. The news, he came to assert, could profane the "very *sanctum sanctorum*" of the mind:

I find it so difficult to dispose of the few facts which to me are significant, that I hesitate to burden my mind with the most insignificant, which only a divine mind could illustrate. Such is, for the most part, the news, – in newspapers and conversation. It is important to preserve the mind's chastity in this respect.... By all manners of boards and traps, threatening the extreme penalty of the divine law, ... it behooves us to preserve the purity and sanctity of the mind.... It is so hard to forget what it is worse than useless to remember. If I am to be a channel or thoroughfare, I prefer that it be of the mountain springs, and not the town sewers, – the Parnassian streams.

"I do not think much of the actual," he wrote himself. "It is something which we have long since done with. It is a sort of vomit in which the unclean love to wallow." During the writing of the 4th version of *WALDEN*, which coincided with Kossuth's tour of the country, [Thoreau](#) created a myth about himself as someone who had risen above the affairs of men, someone who felt the animal dying out in him and the spiritual being established.

In [WALDEN](#), the European revolutions of 1848-1849, the reaction and reprisals that followed, all the attention given in the



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newspapers to Kossuth's visit, to Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état*, to a possible war between France and Great Britain, all these go unmentioned, and the absence reveals how earnestly, perhaps even how desperately, Thoreau sought to diminish their importance to his life. In his journals we see his fascination with and antagonism toward the news of national and international affairs. He devotes half of his essay "Life without Principle," moreover, to a castigation of the news, telling the reader about its dangers, its foulness, its profanity – even mentioning Kossuth by name and ridiculing the "stir" about him: "That excitement about Kossuth, consider how characteristic, but superficial, it was!... For all the fruit of that stir we have the Kossuth hat."¹⁶ In *WALDEN*, however, he purifies his book and his persona by ignoring contemporary world affairs. Characterizing himself (untruthfully) as one "who rarely looks into the newspapers," he claims that "nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French revolution not excepted."

Thoreau's struggle to achieve an oriental aloofness from the affairs of men seems to have first become a serious endeavor for him in the summer of 1850, when [Emerson](#) asked him to go to Fire Island to retrieve the body and possessions of [Margaret Fuller](#). As Robert D. Richardson, Jr. has pointed out, "Death gave life a new imperative for Thoreau." Despite Fuller's rejections of his [DIAL](#) contributions in the early 1840s, Thoreau became her friend and admirer, and during her last summer in [Concord](#), he took her boat riding at dawn on the river. The task he faced at Fire Island thus could not have been pleasant, yet in his journal and in letters to others, he strove to project a philosophical serenity about what he found. In a letter to his admirer H.G.O. Blake, he wrote that he had in his pocket a button torn from the coat of [Giovanni Angelo](#), *marchése d'Ossoli*: "Held up, it intercept the light, – and actual button, – and yet all the life it is connected with is less substantial to me, and interests me less, than my faintest dream. Our thoughts are the epochs in our lives: all else is but a journal of the winds that blew while we were here." Thoreau had not known Ossoli, so his aloof serenity here comes easily; he had known Fuller though, and his attempt to rise above the fact of her death shows strain.

When [Thoreau](#) arrived at the site of the wreck, Fuller's body had not been found, but he stayed in the area and a week later learned that something once human had washed ashore. As he approached it, he saw bones, and in the draft of this letter to Blake he asserted, "There was nothing at all remarkable about them. They were simply some bones lying on the beach. They would

16. The Kossuth hat was a black, low-crowned felt hat with left brim fastened to crown, having a peacock feather. The story of its "invention" by John Nicholas Genin (1819-1878) and its rise to high fashion is told in Donald S. Spencer's *LOUIS KOSSUTH AND YOUNG AMERICA — A STUDY IN SECTIONALISM AND FOREIGN POLICY, 1848-1852* (Columbia, London: U of Missouri P, 1977, pages 59-61). This proprietor of a hat shop on Broadway in New-York next to the American Museum, Genin, also designed a best-selling Jenny Lind Riding Hat.



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not detain the walker there more than so much seaweed. I should think that the fates would not take the trouble to show me any bones again, I so slightly appreciated the favor." He recalled the experience in his journal some three months later, however, and there revealed the difficulty he had in dismissing what he had seen: "I once went in search of the relics of a human body..." he wrote, "which had been cast up the day before on the beach, though the sharks had stripped off the flesh.... It was as conspicuous on that sandy plain as if a generation had labored to pile up a cairn there.... It reigned over the shore. That dead body possessed the shore as no living one could. It showed a title to the sands which no living ruler could."

In the winter of 1851-1852, Thoreau's struggle to assure his own purity became obsessive. Sherman Paul has traced his dissatisfaction with himself to surveying, which [Thoreau](#) found trivial and coarsening. Mary Elkins Moller has speculated that Thoreau was also having sexual fantasies about Mrs. [Lidian Emerson](#) and felt ashamed of them. Whatever the truth of these views (and I think the second takes Thoreau's references to chastity too literally), the fact remains that Thoreau at this time was also struggling to escape from his interest in current events. Surprisingly, this private denouncer of the press had become a subscriber to Horace Greeley's [Weekly Tribune](#), a fact that heightened the tension he felt about preserving his mind's chastity. On January 20, 1852, he wrote,

I do not know but it is too much to read one newspaper in a week, for I now take the weekly [Tribune](#), and for a few days past, it seems to me, I have not dwelt in Concord; the sun, the clouds, the snow, the trees say not so much to me. You cannot serve two masters.... To read the things distant and sounding betrays us into slighting these which are then apparently near and small. We learn to look abroad for our mind and spirit's daily nutriment, and what is this dull town to me? ...All summer and far into the fall I unconsciously went by the newspapers and the news, and now I find it was because the morning and the evening were full of news to me. My walks were full of incidents. I attended not to the affairs of Europe, but to my own affairs in Concord fields.

[Thoreau](#)'s quest for purity and serenity had become particularly difficult because of the excitement surrounding [Lajos Kossuth](#)'s visit and the new interest [Waldo Emerson](#) had taken in things Thoreau considered trivial, including Kossuth. The gradual estrangement of the two men may have begun while Emerson was in England in 1847-1848, writing letters home for Lidian and Thoreau which were little more than catalogues of the great people he had met. Although we know this was his way of providing himself a record of his activities, it probably disappointed. After his return from Europe, Emerson had lectured throughout



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the country, praising England and its people, but when he engaged Thoreau in a conversation on the topic, Henry, not surprisingly, said that the English were "mere soldiers" and their business was "winding up." In the summer of 1851, Emerson, unaware of the new scope and grandeur of Thoreau's journal, unaware of the growth in his spiritual development, wrote off his friend as one who "will not stick." "He is a boy," Emerson added, "& will be an old boy. Pounding beans is good to the end of pounding Empires, but not, if at the end of years, it is only beans."

In a like manner, [Thoreau](#) at about this time began to see that his friend would continue to disappoint him. He bristles at Emerson's patronizing attitude; he disagreed with his treatment of [Margaret Fuller](#) in the MEMOIRS; and most of all he resented his new worldliness. In ENGLISH TRAITS (1856) Emerson, drawing on his lectures of 1848-1850, would celebrate the manners of the British aristocracy and assert that "whatever tends to form manners or to finish men, has a great value. Every one who has tasted the delight of friendship will respect every social guard which our manners can establish." For Thoreau, there was "something devilish in manners" that could come between friends, and writing of Emerson in the winter of 1851, he complained, "One of the best men I know often offends me by uttering made words – the very best words, of course, or dinner speeches, most smooth and gracious and fluent repartees.... O would you but be simple and downright! Would you but cease your palaver! It is the misfortune of being a gentleman and famous." As Joel Porte has observed, the failure of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) and Emerson's "manifest success" had probably contributed to Thoreau's bitterness.

A pushy little ultra-conservative mof, the [Reverend Professor Francis Bowen](#) had what was termed at the time "a remarkable talent for giving offense." Precisely while [Kossuth](#) was riding the crest of the wave of American political correctness, Bowen publicly denounced that revolutionary. (*Nota Bene*: This differs from [Henry Thoreau](#)'s reaction not merely as public denunciation differs from private distaste but also as cheap motivation differs from abundant reason.)

But this is all very easy to figure out, at least as far as Larry J. Reynolds is concerned — what has happened was merely that [Kossuth](#) has come between [Waldo Emerson](#) and [Thoreau](#)! – Wow, now that we understand that, it all becomes perfectly clear. Continuing to quote, from pages 166-70 of this extraordinarily confident EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS AND THE AMERICAN LITERARY RENAISSANCE influence study:

In the early months of 1852, Kossuth's visit to [Concord](#) widened the separation between [Thoreau](#) and [Emerson](#) into a permanent gulf. As Thoreau spent more and more time communing with nature, trying to cleanse himself of what he called the "news," Emerson saw fit to criticize him for these efforts. Frustrated, Thoreau declared in his journal, "I have got to that pass with my friend that our words do not pass with each other for what they are worth. We speak in vain; there is none to hear. He finds fault with me that I walk alone, when I pine for want of a companion;



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that I commit my thoughts to a diary even on my walks, instead of seeking to share them generously with a friend; curses my practice even." Emerson, who would soon lecture on the "Conduct of Life" in [Canada](#) and then deliver his "Address to Kossuth" in [Concord](#), could not see the heroism in Thoreau's aloofness. Thoreau, meanwhile, who sought to become a better man through his solitary walks, felt unappreciated and frustrated. On May 4, in an entry both defensive and immodest, he dismissed the great [Kossuth](#) and those like Emerson who honored him:

This excitement about Kossuth is not interesting to me, it is so superficial. It is only another kind of dancing or of politics. Men are making speeches to him all over the country, but each expresses only the thought, or the want of thought, of the multitude. No man stands on truth.... You can pass your hand under the largest mob, a nation in revolution even, and, however solid a bulk they may make, like a hail-cloud in the atmosphere, you may not meet so much as a cobweb of support. They may not rest, even by a point, on eternal foundations. But an individual standing on truth you cannot pass your hand under, for his foundations reach to the centre of the universe. So superficial these men and their doings, it is life on a leaf or a chip which has nothing but air or water beneath.

The length and tone of this entry reveals the importance of the matter to him; obviously, he considers himself the "individual standing on truth," whose depth far exceeds that of any "nation in revolution" or military hero. And one week later, during the excitement surrounding Kossuth's visit to [Concord](#), during the afternoon of Emerson's speech and reception, Thoreau, in order to show how little he thought of these matters, entered only the following in his journal: "P.M. - **Kossuth here.**"

All of Thoreau's struggle with current events, with Kossuth's visit, with Emerson's worldliness and disesteem lay behind the important fourth version of [WALDEN](#). As he revised and expanded his manuscript throughout 1852, Thoreau endowed his persona with a serene aloofness, creating a hero interested in eternal truths, not pointless political ones. Having discovered that "a sane and growing man revolutionizes every day" and that no "institutions of man can survive a morning experience," he fashioned an answer to his best friend, who thought Kossuth a great man and Henry Thoreau an unsociable boy.

As he revised [WALDEN](#), [Thoreau](#) made major additions.... The thrust of almost all of these additions is to show how nature, which is holy and heroic, can bestow those virtues on one who practices chastity. His central statement on chastity was added, of course, to "Higher Laws" and asserts that "we are conscious of an animal in us, which awakens in proportion as our higher nature slumbers.... Chastity is the flowering of man; and what are called Genius, Heroism, Holiness, and the like, are but



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various fruits which succeed it. Man flows at once to God when the channel of purity is open.... He is blessed who is assured that the animal is dying out in him day by day, and the divine being established. Not surprisingly, Thoreau presents himself as having achieved this assuredness. He is among the blessed.

The chastity Thoreau has in mind is as much intellectual as physical, and to attain it one must abstain not merely from sexual intercourse but also from trivial thoughts and interests. In his addition to "Solitude" he explains the process it involves: "By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent." The result is a feeling of doubleness, whereby a person "may be either a drift-wood in the stream, or Indra in the sky looking down on it." He admits that "this doubleness may easily make us poor neighbors and friends sometimes," but he makes it clear that it is worth the price. In "The Ponds" he adds paragraphs stressing the "serenity and purity" of Walden and suggests a correspondence between it and himself. "Many men have been likened to it," he writes, "But few deserve that honor." That he has earned the honor through his way of life is a point made repeatedly. In his addition to "Baker Farm", Thoreau highlights the blessedness which communion with nature has accorded him. Like Walt Whitman's persona in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," or more recently Loren Eiseley's star thrower, Thoreau's hero becomes literally illuminated by nature. He stands one day at the base "of a rainbow's arch, which filled the lower stratum of the atmosphere, tinged the grass and leaves around, and dazzling [him] as if [he] looked through colored crystal." TO emphasize the religious implications of the experience, he adds, "As I walked on the railroad causeway, I used to wonder at the halo of light around my shadow, and would fain fancy myself one of the elect." In the additions to the "Conclusion," Thoreau makes explicit the successful effort to achieve spiritual renewal through aloofness. "I delight to come to my bearings, -" he declares, "not walk in procession with pomp and parade, in a conspicuous place, but to walk even with the Builder of the universe, if I may, - not to live in this restless, nervous, bustling, trivial Nineteenth Century, but stand or sit thoughtfully while it goes by."

The place he would sit, of course, is far above men and their doings, which diminishes them in his eyes. And this particular view is the one dramatized in his most famous addition, the classic battle of the ants in "Brute Neighbors." The episode comes from an entry made in his journal on January 22, 1852, while [Kossuth](#) was visiting Washington and while Horace Greeley in his [Tribune](#) and James Watson Webb in his [Courier and Enquirer](#) were debating the nature of the Hungarian War. Thoreau, like most of his contemporaries, found himself engaged (against his will, however) by what called "the great controversy now going on in the world between the despotic and the republican principle," and this is why he associates the two tribes of



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warring ants with the European revolutionary scene and calls them "the red republicans and the black despots or imperialists." His description of their war has become famous because of its frequent use in anthologies, and is surely right when he says that one reason for its selection is that it is "easily taken from its context."

Raymond Adams errs though in adding that "it is an episode that hardly has so much as a context." By virtue of both its hidden connection to revolutionary Europe and its subtle connection to the theme of spiritual serenity, the episode is part of larger contexts that shaped its features.

As [Thoreau](#) describes the battle of the ants, he reveals that side of his personality engaged by physical heroism in the actual world. The ferocity and resolve of the combatants, the mutilation and gore that attend their life-and-death struggle thoroughly engage him. "I felt for the rest of that day," he admits, "as if I had had my feelings excited and harrowed by witnessing the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door." On the other hand, through the use of the mock-heroic, Thoreau generates an irony that allows him to stress once more the spiritual side of his persona, the side that dismisses politics, revolutions, and wars as trivial. The mother of a single red ant, we are told, has charged her son "to return with his shield or upon it," and the fighting [ants](#), the narrator speculates, could, not to his surprise, have "had their respective musical bands stationed on some eminent chip, and played their national airs the while, to excite the slow and cheer the dying combatants." With such irony Thoreau diminishes the importance, not of the ants, but of the men they resemble. Just as he claimed that [Kossuth](#) and his American admirers were involved in "life on a leaf or a chip," he here brings the metaphor to life and makes the same statement about warring nations. The purpose of this addition, and of his others, is to show that true heroism is associated with aloof serenity, not brutal warfare.

When Thoreau revised his journal entry for inclusion in [WALDEN](#), he claimed the ant battle occurred "in the Presidency of [James Knox Polk](#), five years before the passage of [Daniel Webster](#)'s Fugitive-Slave Bill," thus making it contemporaneous with his stay at the pond and registering his criticism, as he had in "Civil Disobedience," of the [Mexican War](#). Ultimately, the issue of slavery disturbed him far more than revolution in Europe, and he found it difficult to resist the temptation to speak out against it. In later versions of [WALDEN](#), Thoreau expanded upon the ideas he introduced in 1852, extending his treatment of the triumph of the spiritual over the animal and filling out his account of the progress of the seasons, which, of course, complements the theme of renewal. Meanwhile, paradoxically, he remained a deeply passionate man, more engaged than others of his acquaintance by the "trivial Nineteenth Century." When the



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slave [Anthony Burns](#) was arrested in 1854, Thoreau, burning with rage, publicly denounced the Massachusetts authorities in his inflammatory "Slavery in Massachusetts": "I walk toward one of our ponds," he thundered, "but what signifies the beauty of nature when men are base? ...Who can be serene in a country where both the rulers and the ruled are without principle? The remembrance of my country spoils my walk. My thoughts are murder to the State, and involuntarily go plotting against her." Five years later, of course, he stepped forward to defend [John Brown](#) more ardently than anyone else in the country. Clearly then, in 1852, when Thoreau endowed the persona of WALDEN with remarkable purity and serenity, he was mythologizing himself; he was, in response to the "*tintinnabulum* from without," creating a new kind of hero for a revolutionary age.

Have we got this very clear now? According to Larry J. Reynolds, it has been demonstrated that Thoreau, a boy playing at life, was not merely fighting a spiritual battle to remain aloof but indeed was fantasizing that he had won this battle, and celebrating his final victory. But Thoreau has been detected as nevertheless full of bitterness, as resentful, as feeling unappreciated and frustrated. Fundamentally a "defensive and immodest" pretense rather than any sort of record of a spiritual journey, [WALDEN: OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) merely celebrated cheaply in words what its author could not accomplish in fact: the big win in a struggle between the spiritual in its author and the warrior-wannabee. This is Thoreau as a mere self-deluding boy who, when confronted by a real life hero out of the real world of struggle, struggles to stand "aloof" in order to console himself by considering himself to be the true hero, to be indeed the "individual standing on truth" whose real worth far exceeds the appreciation offered to any such mere celebrity wrapped up in mere mundane push-and-shove concerns. It is hard to imagine that Reynolds is not terming Thoreau a self-deluded coward.

FIGURING OUT WHAT AMOUNTS TO A "HISTORICAL CONTEXT" IS WHAT THE CRAFT OF HISTORICIZING AMOUNTS TO, AND THIS NECESSITATES DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE SET OF EVENTS THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE EVENT E COULD BECOME POSSIBLE, AND MOST CAREFULLY DISTINGUISHING THEM FROM ANOTHER SET OF EVENTS THAT COULD NOT POSSIBLY OCCUR UNTIL SUBSEQUENT TO EVENT E.



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August 22, Sunday: At an antislavery meeting in the meetinghouse of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) in Salem, [Ohio](#), [Sojourner Truth](#) confronted [Frederick Douglass](#) with a demand to know, “Is God gone?” This is the event to which [Harriet Beecher Stowe](#) would be alluding, when she published an article on Truth more than a decade later in [The Atlantic Monthly](#), recounting again the fabrication (she had initiated this three years before, in the pages of the New-York [Independent](#)) she alleged that she had heard straight from the mouth of [Wendell Phillips](#) (who had not claimed to have been himself present), ascribing the confrontation to a meeting of undesignated date in Boston’s Faneuil Hall and positioning Truth in the front row of seats.¹⁷ Mrs. Stowe was in the process of making “Frederick, is God dead?” such a famous repolished phrase that “Is God dead?” would eventually be inscribed on Truth’s tombstone in Battle Creek, Michigan. In Douglass’s own very much later version of what he had said at that meeting at the Friends’ meetinghouse in Salem, we note that he is not struck speechless. He reconstructed the incident, instead, as one in which it had been **him** who had had the last

17. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s article would also create other false factual details, such as that [Sojourner Truth](#) was out of Africa, that she was dead, that her initial white help had come from the Quakers, etc.

word: “No,’ I answered, ‘and because God is not dead slavery can only end in blood.’” Douglass would then go on, in his memoirs, to prove himself right by pointing out that 1.) in fact slavery had then ended in blood, in the US Civil War of 1862-1865, and that 2.) Truth herself eventually had learned to agree with is “sanguinary doctrine,” and had become, as he had been earlier, “an advocate of the sword.” He had taken his “quaint old sister” to have been speaking in opposition to this at the time because this woman “was of the Garrison school of non-resistants, and was shocked at my sanguinary doctrine.”¹⁸



Debating Holding One’s God in One’s Fist

Douglass would not controvert (of course) that an incident something like what had been reported had indeed occurred, but would also (of course) refrain from confessing this incidental detail — that in fact her deliberate harassment of him while he was orating had occurred in a low-rent Quaker venue in Ohio rather than, as fabricated by Stowe or Phillips, in downtown Boston’s toney Faneuil Hall.






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1853

[John Buchanan Floyd](#) was again elected to the Virginia House of Delegates.

[Richard Realf](#) spent the year in Leicestershire in England, as a student of scientific agriculture.

In the South, in Fairfield, South Carolina in the fall of 1843,  one John Brown had been sentenced “to hang by the neck until your body be dead” for having aided a South Carolinian who was trying to escape from enslavement. But this had not been the famous northern interloper of 1859, [Captain John Brown](#), this had been a man from Maine named John L. Brown. The national and international petitions for clemency

18. Although it was not Friedrich Nietzsche but [Waldo Emerson](#) who 1st spoke of the death of God (he did so, as a counterfactual hypothetical, in his Divinity School Address address in 1838), his point then had been that to consider that the age of direct inspiration was over was to consider impiously that God had died. This was the same thought as expressed here by Truth when she inquired of the belligerent Douglass in effect whether he supposed that human individuals would need to take the issues of cosmic injustice into their own self-righteous and deluded hands. —All this was quite different from the twist which Nietzsche would give to the thought in the 1881-1885 period, for he would in that later marketplace of ideas begin to raise not the question of whether anyone was supposing impiously that God was dead but, rather, what was going to follow from the fact that God had, indeed, become totally unavailable to us — and, what was going to follow from the fact that this had happened at our own responsibility. These meditations on the question “Is God dead?” in these antebellum years would not include any reflection on the possibility of God having absented himself, or having died, such ideas being unthinkable absurdities within all then-pertinent frames of reference. The Nietzsche stuff about how God died of shame, and the consequent “God is dead” school of theology, would come within an unrecognizably altered frame of consciousness. So, we need to block it entirely out of our minds for our purposes here.

According to [Wendell Phillips](#), [Frederick Douglass](#) had been so influenced by [John Brown](#) that he had advocated that the slaves of the South had

no possible hope except in their own right arms.

Douglass was thus standing to commit the Biblical error “trying to hold Eloah in one’s fist.” But Phillips had situated [Sojourner Truth](#) in the front row listening to this. As Phillips had Douglass finish, he had Truth calling out

FREDERICK! IS GOD DEAD?

Was [Phillips](#)’s Truth seconding a puerile [Hawthorne](#) sentiment, that when it be God’s will, then will human slavery “vanish like a dream” without anybody needing to lift their little finger? Nope, Sojourner knew that slavery was not a dream that would vanish like a dream!


The interesting fact about these two apparently identical attitudes, that of Hawthorne and that of Truth, is that they are as diametrically opposed as are black and white. Although the two might be made to appear similar in outline in poor light, on the basis of their shared vocabulary of God-talk, in fact were we to ask the powerful beneficiaries of injustice to trust in God to correct wrongs being done by them, this would be the **opposite** of our asking the powerless victims of injustice to trust in God to correct wrongs being done to them. The difference, which makes these two situations opposite, is that a powerful beneficiary of injustice has no basis for relying on his or her own judgment, since such a judgment is and must be inherently merely self-serving.

Note that Hawthorne’s position was compatible with the vengeance of the strong against the weak, merely enabling this vengeance to continue, whereas [Sojourner Truth](#)’s position was incompatible with the vengeance of the weak against the strong, preventing it from beginning. In the case of the powerful, what trusting in God to correct wrongs leads to is violence and more violence and the perpetuation of violence, whereas in the case of the powerless, this leads only to: **decency and more decency**.



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in this case, flowing across the desk of Governor James Henry Hammond (1810-1864), had caused the governor to commute the sentence of death and then to respond at length in defense of the institution of chattel slavery and in opposition to the practice of slave stealing, and the Charleston SC Mercury had subsequently put his thoughts out in the form of pamphlets — and at this point they were being republished as PRO-SLAVERY ARGUMENT, and in 1860,  this Southern gentleman's responses would receive additional general publication.



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1854

[Elizabeth A. Parkhill Gloucester](#) and [the Reverend James Newton Gloucester](#) gave up their 2d-hand clothing store on 7th Avenue in [New-York](#).

Victor Hugo, in exile on the island of Guernsey, assisted in the campaign against the hanging by the English government of a local man guilty of murder. After the execution he attempted to transform this agitation into a general campaign for the abolition of [capital punishment](#) by the British.

COLDBLOODED MURDER

He produced at this time what would later be repurposed and would be transformed by its new context into the single most famous and graphic European image to appear in the wake of the raid by American abolitionists upon the US arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#). In this engraving, in an indistinct scene of gloom, a human figure hangs from a gallows. Shafts of light are, however, falling on the figure on the gallows, from one side of the heavens.

It would be in late 1859 or early 1860 that Hugo would be moved to repurpose this bleak illustration to indicate the figure as being [John Brown](#) on his American gallows, and he would be able to do so simply by inscribing beneath it the words:

*Pro Christo—Sicut Christus, John Brown, — Charleston.
Designed by Victor Hugo.*

Jesse Hoover moved from Ohio with his father Eli. They traveled by river boat and covered wagon to a farm outside West Branch, Iowa, a small town founded by [Quakers](#).

HERBERT HOOVER

During this year 84 certificates of membership from very divergent sources would be received by the Iowa [Quakers](#). When the Red Cedar Monthly Meeting (“[Springdale](#)”) became overcrowded these new immigrants moved on to the northwest, and for many years the fertile divide between the Iowa River and Cedar River to the northwest of Springdale would be known as “Quaker Ridge.”

The immigration into Iowa the present season is astonishing and unprecedented. For miles and miles, day after day, the prairies of Illinois are lined with cattle and wagons, pushing on towards this prosperous State. At a point beyond Peoria, during a single month, seventeen hundred and forty-three wagons had passed, and all for Iowa.



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How very different the peaceable settlement of Iowa was, as above, from the warlike settlement that was going on simultaneously in the [Kansas Territory](#)! [Amos Adams Lawrence](#), co-founder of the emigration company concept, has a town there named after him; after [Kansas](#) would become “[Bleeding Kansas](#)” such emigration companies would be supplying arms and ammunition to their anti-slavery settlers. The city of Topeka was founded by 5 [antislavery](#) activists. Five of [John Brown](#)’s sons went to the [Kansas Territory](#), taking with them 2 small shotguns and a revolver and staking claims 8 or 10 miles from [Osawatimie](#).



John Brown Statue dedicated May 9, 1935 at John Brown Memorial State Park located at Osawatimie, Kansas

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

The beginning of publication of the Leavenworth [Herald](#), 1st newspaper in the [Kansas Territory](#).

[Thaddeus Hyatt](#) became actively involved in the abolitionist movement after Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The law, which mandated that the question of legalizing slavery in the [Kansas Territory](#) be settled by the territory’s voters, would spark a race between proslavery and antislavery factions to move to Kansas and tip the ballot boxes. These factions would clash in what would come to be regarded as “Bleeding Kansas.” Several state-level committees would be formed to provide aid to antislavery settlers, including the New York Kansas League of which [Hyatt](#) was president (during this year, also, he would be awarded Patent No. 11,695 for a “Vault-Light”). [Hyatt](#) and William Barnes simultaneously but separately embarked on efforts to organize counties in upstate New York to participate in packing the [Kansas Territory](#) with antislavery voters.



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Meanwhile the South was packing the territory with armed proslavery settlers. You do understand what was going on here, don't you? –The antislavery North and the proslavery South, locked in opposition to one another in the US federal Senate, had determined that they would fight a [proxy war](#) in this territory, by pouring in armed proslavery activists and armed antislavery activists as sponsored “settlers.” They would kill each other and kill each other, and otherwise dominate and subdue each other, until in the end one or the other side in this proxy struggle would succeed in packing the ballot boxes sufficiently full — and the new state of [Kansas](#) would then emerge in the form of two extra votes in the US Senate for the proslavery South, that would allow the proslavery South to dominate the nation, or else emerge as two extra votes in the US Senate for the antislavery North, which would allow the antislavery North to dominate the nation. Study up on [proxy war](#), it isn't just something that happened to Vietnam.

April 3, Monday: [John Brown](#) wrote from Akron, Ohio to [John Brown, Jr.](#)

Dear Son John,

We received your letter of the 24th March two or three days since, and one from Henry, dated 25th March, about the same time. They had got on well so far, but had to go by stage the balance of the way. Father got home well, and was with us over night Friday last. We have all been middling well of late, but very busy, having had the care of the whole concern at Mr. Perkins's place until Friday night. I had a most comfortable time settling last year's business, and dividing with Mr. Perkins, and have to say of his dealing with me that he has shown himself to be every inch a gentleman. I bring to my new home five of the red cows and ten calves; he to have \$100 out of my share of the last year's wool, to make us even on last year's business; after dividing all crops, he paying me in hand \$28.55, balance due me on all except four of the five cows. I am going now to work with a cheap team of two yoke oxen, on which I am indebted, till I can sell my wool, \$89; \$46 I have paid towards them. I would like to have all my children settle within a few miles of each other and of me, but I cannot take the responsibility of advising you to make any forced move to change your location. Thousands have to regret that they did not let middling "well alone." I should think you ought to get for your place another \$125; and I think you may, if you are not too anxious. That would buy you considerable of a farm in Essex or elsewhere, and we may get the Homestead Law passed yet. It has been a question with me whether you would not do better to hire all your team work done than to have your little place overstocked possibly, after some trouble about buying them, paying taxes, insurance, and some expense for implements to use them with. If you get a little overstocked, everything will seem to do poorly. Frederick is very much better, but both he and Owen have been having the ague lately. They leave the Hill farm soon. I do not at this moment know of a good opening for you this way. One thing I do not fear to advise and even urge; and that is the habitual "fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom." Commending you all to his mercy, I remain

Your affectionate father,



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John Brown.

In the afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) went to the Cliffs by boat.



April 3. Saw from window with glass seven ducks on meadow-water, — only one or two conspicuously white, — these, black heads, white throats and breasts and along sides, — the rest of the ducks, brownish, probably young males and females. Probably the golden-eye. [Jardine](#) says it is rare to see more than one full-plumaged male in a flock.

P.M. — To Cliffs by boat.

Did I see crow blackbirds with the red-wings [**Red-winged Blackbird**  *Agelaius phoeniceus*] and hear their harsher chattering?

The water has gone down so much that I have to steer carefully to avoid the thick hummocks loft here and there on the meadow by the ice. I see the deep holes they were taken out of. A muskrat has just built a small cabin, — apparently a bushel of mouthfuls on one. No clams up yet. I see a very little snow ice still, at a distance on the north sides of hills and walls. The wind is southeasterly. This is methinks the first hazy day, though not so warm as the 17th of Mardi. The aspect of the woods reminds me of landscapes, and the sough of the wind in the pines sounds warmer, whispering of summer. I think I may say that Flint's broke up entirely on the first wet (lay after the cold spell, — i.e. the 31st of March, — though I have not been there lately. Fair Haven will last some days yet.



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1855

[Charles Wesley Moffet](#) or Moffett traveled west to [Springdale, Iowa](#).

[Thaddeus Hyatt](#) received Patent No. 12,595 for “Illuminating Vault-Covers” (this would help him pay for his antislavery activities in the [Kansas Territory](#)).

[James Redpath](#) moved to the Kansas/Missouri border and reported for a Free Soil newspaper, the [Missouri Democrat](#), on the dispute over slavery in [Kansas Territory](#). For the following 3 years he would be engaging in politics there, writing dispatches, securing support in New England for Free Soil settlers, and, allegedly, offering some poetry about Kansas.



The [New-York](#) law clerk [John E. Cook](#) became a member of Charles Lenhart’s guerrilla force operated out of Lawrence in the [Kansas Territory](#). He would make himself into an excellent shot. He would be dispatched by [John Brown](#) to [Harpers Ferry](#) more than a year before the raid to work out the details on the ground, and would secure employment in the area as a lock tender on the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, as a schoolteacher, and as a bookseller.



THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

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[Oliver Brown](#) went with his father [John Brown](#) to the [Kansas Territory](#), meeting there 4 other of Brown's sons who had already arrived, and settled at [Osawatomic](#).



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(Oliver would return to [North Elba](#) in October 1856, where he would marry with Martha Evelyn Brewster ([Martha Brewster Brown](#)) in 1858. She would be sent back north just before the raid on [Harpers Ferry](#).)



A man who was converted to a life of violence by the violence of the [Thomas Simms \(Sims\)](#) case was the Reverend [Daniel Foster](#), the Concord minister who had attracted notice by praying on the dock in 1851 as Simms was being extradited from Boston to Savannah, Georgia. Leaving the Concord church, Foster would become Chaplain of the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1857 and would be in attendance when [John Brown](#) spoke before a committee of the House and Senate about the Kansas troubles. Almost immediately afterward Foster would quit his Chaplaincy, “convinced that our cause must receive a baptism of blood before it can be victorious,” and move to Kansas.

I expect to serve in Capt. John Brown's company in the next Kansas war, which I hope is inevitable & near at hand.



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October: [John Brown](#) joined his 5 sons in the [Kansas Territory](#).

[August Bondi](#) became acquainted with [John Brown](#). He opened a general store at Lawrence, one of the 1st places of business there (he would keep this store until 1856).



After its mutiny against [Major George Alexander Hamilton Blake](#) in Taos, New Mexico on March 8th, Company F had been broken up and its troopers dispersed to various other companies of the [1st US Regiment of Dragoons](#). 1st Sergeant Thomas Fitzsimmons, minus his stripes, had been assigned to Company K. On account of a reputation for bad behavior and dishonesty, the other troopers beat him so severely as to put him in the hospital at Fort Union. He would, however, reenlisted in the 1st Dragoons, and by the end of the Civil War would again be a sergeant, although the name of the 1st Dragoons had changed to Company A of the 1st Cavalry.



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1856

Slavery advocates were swarming into Kansas in an effort to stack the territorial legislature with men who would vote to make Kansas a slave state; a move made possible by the "popular sovereignty" principle of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. Olathe was founded. Wide-spread violence was breaking out between pro-slavery and abolitionists groups.

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

That spring, after a mass meeting in Illinois calling for recruits to aid "Bleeding Kansas," Luke Fisher Parsons would be one of 6 local men who accepted the bounty of \$25 and pledged to remain in the Kansas Territory until it was made a free state. At the age of 22, Luke would head toward to the Kansas Territory and his destiny as a gunslinger.

The Worcester Unitarian reverend, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, was appointed as agent for the Massachusetts Kansas Aid Committee that was helping recruit and arm people who would emigrate to Kansas and would there vote against the territory becoming a new slave state (the Kansas/Nebraska Act repealing the Missouri Compromise). During this year the Reverend authored "A Ride Through Kansas" [sic]. In the "Pottawatomie Massacre," John Brown and his followers murdered 5 supposedly pro-slavery men. While the "Chevalier" Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe was away, heroically leading anti-slavery settlers to the territory, back home the undutiful wife and mother Julia Ward Howe was publishing poetry and plays. There are references in their correspondence not only to love turning into alienation, but also to familial violence.



In support of freedom voters moving into the Kansas Territory, Friend John Greenleaf Whittier wrote:

The Kansas Emigrants.

WE cross the prairie as of old
The pilgrims crossed the sea,
To make the West, as they the East,
The homestead of the free!

We go to rear a wall of men
On Freedom's southern line,
And plant beside the cotton-tree
The rugged Northern pine!

We're flowing from our native hills
As our free rivers flow;
The blessing of our Mother-land
Is on us as we go.

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We go to plant her common schools,
On distant prairie swells,
And give the Sabbaths of the wild
The music of her bells.

Upbearing, like the Ark of old,
The Bible in our van,
We go to test the truth of God
Against the fraud of man.

No pause, nor rest, save where the streams
That feed the Kansas run,
Save where our Pilgrim gonfalon
Shall flout the setting sun!

We'll tread the prairie as of old
Our fathers sailed the sea,
And make the West, as they the East,
The homestead of the free!

[Charles Plummer Tidd](#), in search of excitement, emigrated to "[Bleeding Kansas](#)" with the party of Dr. Calvin Cutter of Worcester, Massachusetts.



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(After joining [John Brown](#)'s party at Tabor in 1857 he would become one of the followers of "Shubel Morgan" who raided into Missouri in 1858. Tidd and [John E. Cook](#) would be particularly warm friends.)



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Spring There were heavy rains, and flood crests moved down the rivers of America. The levee building and drainage of swamplands, the grand schemes, of the previous decades seemed only to have been making the drainage situation worse and worse. (Actually what was wrong was that we had an entirely problematic attitude toward The Swamp.)

[Here's an incidental thought. There is a difference to be noted between antebellum America, that is, before the [Civil War](#), and postbellum America, in regard to the creation and maintenance of river levees. Before the Civil War all the actual heavy lifting of levee work was done by gangs of black slaves under the lash. After the Civil War virtually all the actual heavy lifting of levee work, except for emergency situations involving volunteers in panic, has been done by black chain gangs under the eye of a white guard with a shotgun. It is true to say that such American levees have not been built out of black muck, but rather, they have been built out of forced black labor. There is a hypothesis that the song "I've Been Workin' on the Railroad" originated as "I've Been Workin' on the Levee." When you hear the word "levee," don't think of anything innocent.]

In the Charleston [Mercury](#), Warren Wilkes, who had commanded for a time a band of so-called southern proslavery "settlers" in the [Kansas Territory](#), alleged that: "If the south secures Kansas, she will extend slavery into all territories south of the fortieth parallel of north latitude to the Rio Grande; and this, of course, will secure for her pent-up institution of slavery an ample outlet, and restore her power in congress. If the north secures Kansas, the power of the south in congress will be gradually diminished, and the slave property will become valueless. All depends upon the action of the present moment." ([John Brown](#) would go to "[Bleeding Kansas](#)" for the same reason as these proslavery outlaws would go — not to settle but to kill others.)

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W.E. Burghardt Du Bois has attributed the notorious Southern penchant for violence to **hegemony**:

The white people of the South are essentially a fine kindly breed.... Perhaps their early and fatal mistake was that they refused long before the [Civil War](#) to allow the South differences of opinion.... Men act as they do in the South, they murder, they [lynch](#), they insult, because they listen to but one side of a question.

If this analysis is correct, it must have been because of Southern hegemony that Warren Wilkes wanted to go off to the [Kansas Territory](#) to create hegemony. (If this analysis by W.E.B. Du Bois is correct, would it have been because of Northern hegemony that John Brown wanted to go off to the [Kansas Territory](#) to create hegemony? —Or would it have been because of Southern hegemony that John Brown wanted to go off to Kansas to prevent hegemony? —Gosh, don't such analyses get real complicated real quick?)

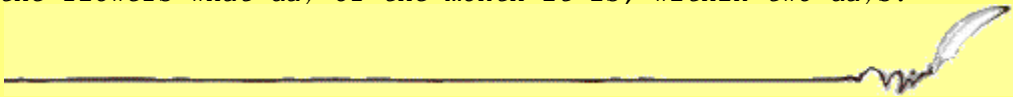


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May 21, Wednesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) to his journal, in regard to the [Ovenbird](#) [Seiurus aurocapillus](#) and/or [Common Yellowthroat](#) [Geothlypis trichas](#):

Yesterday to the Sawmill Brook with Henry. He was in search of yellow violet (pubescens) and menyantes which he waded into the water for. & which he concluded, on examination, had been out five days. Having found his flowers, he drew out of his breast pocket his diary & read the names of all the plants that should bloom on this day, 20 May; whereof he keeps account as a banker when his notes fall due.... he heard a note which he calls that of the nightwarbler, a bird he has never identified, has been in search of for twelve years; which, always, when he sees, is in the act of diving down into a tree or bush, & which 'tis vain to seek; the only bird that sings indifferently by night & by day. I told him, he must beware of finding & booking him, lest life should have nothing more to show him. He said, "What you seek in vain for half your life, one day you come full upon all the family at dinner. You seek him like a dream, and as soon as you find him, you become his prey." He thinks he could tell by the flowers what day of the month it is, within two days.



**When you find your dream,
you become its prey.**



May 21: Saw two splendid rose-breasted grosbeaks [[Rose-breasted Grosbeak](#) [Pheucticus ludovicianus](#)] with females in the young wood in Emerson's lot. What strong-colored fellows, black, white, and fiery rose-red breasts! Strong-natured, too, with their stout bills. A clear, sweet singer, like a tanager but hoarse somewhat, and not shy.

[Augustus Goddard Peabody](#) got married with Elizabeth S. Holway of Machias, Maine (the couple would produce a son and 3 daughters).

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to H.G.O. Blake, including the following closing, which Dr. Alfred I. Tauber considers relevant to Thoreau's attitude toward time and eternity: "It is not that we love to be alone, but that we love to soar, and when we do soar, the company grows thinner & thinner till there is none at all. It is either the Tribune on the plain, a sermon on the mount, or a very private **extacy** [*sic*] still higher up. We are not the less to aim at the summits though the multitude does not ascend them. Use all the society that will abet you. But perhaps I do not enter into the spirit of your talk."



Concord May 21st '56

Mr Blake,

I have not for a long time been putting such thoughts together as I should like to read to the company you speak of. I have enough of





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that sort to say, or even read, but not time now to arrange it. Something I have prepared might prove for their entertainment or refreshment perchance, but I would not like to have a hat carried round for it. I have just been reading some papers to see if they would do for your company; but though I thought pretty well of them as long as I read them to myself, when I got an audit or to try them on, I felt that they would not answer. How could I let you drum up a company to hear them? — In fine, what I have is either too scattered or loosely arranged, or too light, or else is too scientific and matter of fact (I run a good deal into that of late) for so hungry a company. I am still a learner, not a teacher, feeding somewhat omnivorously browsing both stalk & leaves — but I shall perhaps be enabled to speak with the more precision & authority by & by — if philosophy & sentiment are not buried under a multitude of details.

I do not refuse, but accept your invitation — only changing the time — — I consider myself invited to Worcester once for all — & many thanks to the inviter.

As for the Harvard excursion, will you let me suggest another? Do you & Brown come to Concord on Saturday, if the weather promises well, and spend the Sunday here on the river or hills or both. So we shall save some of our money, (which is of next importance to our souls) and lose — I do not know what. You say you talk-ed of coming here before, now do it. I do not propose this because I think that I am worth your spending time with — but because I hope that we may prove flint & steel to one another. It is at most only an hour's ride further, & you can at any rate do what you please when you get here.

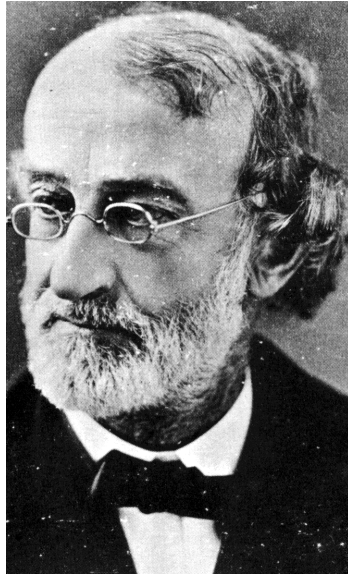
Then we will see if we have any apology to offer for our existence. SO come to Concord! — come to Concord! — come to Concord! — or — — — — your suit shall be defaulted.

As for the dispute about solitude & society any comparison is impertinent. It is an idling down on the plain at the base of a mountain instead of climbing steadily to its top. Of course you will be glad of all the society you can get to go up with. Will you go to glory with me? is the burden of the song. I love society so much that I swallowed it all at a gulp — i.e. all that came in my way. It is not that we love to be alone, but that we love to soar, and when we do soar, the company grows thinner & thinner till there is none at all. It is either the Tribune on the plain, a sermon on the mount, or a very private extacy still higher up. We are not the less to aim at the summits though the multitude does not ascend them. Use all the society that will abet you. But perhaps I do not enter into the spirit of your talk. — H.D.T.

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At [Lawrence](#) in the [Kansas Territory](#), [Sheriff Samuel J. "Bogus" Jones](#) and his proslavery posse known as the "Border Ruffians" destroyed the Free State Hotel and 2 presses. Sheriff Jones, who considered antislavery settlers to be "fanatics," was heard to exclaim:

This is the happiest day of my life!

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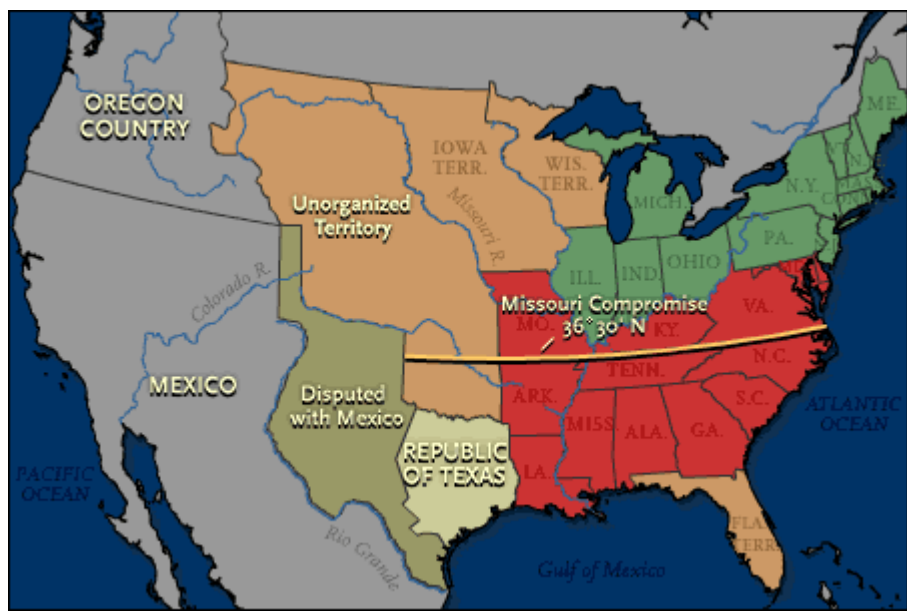
One of these freedom "fanatics" had an interesting symbol for Kansas slavery, in a book he published in that same year of 1856. Quoth the raven, "Kaw":

The name of this tribe is variously spelled Kansas, Kansas, Cansas, Konzas, and Conzas; and to cap all absurdity, they scarcely know themselves by any other word than Kaw. Should the Territory be erected into a slave state, it might be advisable to adopt this latter as the title, being the ominous croak of the raven.

— Max Greene, THE KANZAS REGION, as quoted on page 98 of William Least Heat-Moon's PRAIRYERTH (A DEEP MAP) [Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1991].

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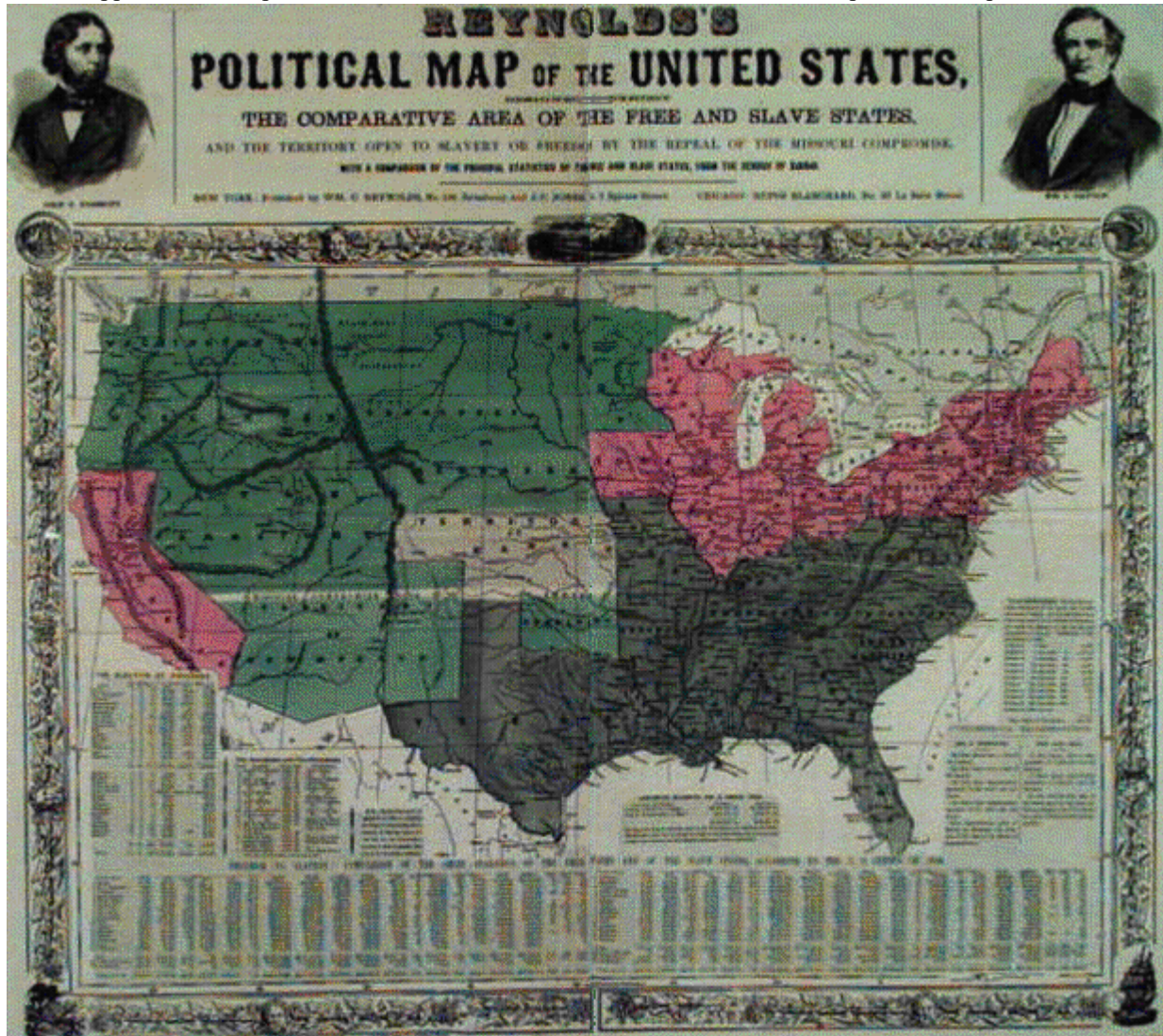
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Here is a political map dating to this year, emphasizing the split between free and slave states, and what might happen to the comparative areas of the two entities should the Missouri Compromise be repealed:





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Afterward [August Bondi](#), a merchant of Lawrence, [Kansas](#), would join the company of [John Brown, Jr.](#)



When this force would disband he would join the company of John [Brown, Sr.](#), and take part in the engagement at Black Jack, and would be with Brown in his different raids along the border until the final fight at [Osawatomie](#) in September 1856. During the border warfare his own property would be destroyed by Quantrell's men, and some years later the federal government would allow him \$1,000 in damages.

According to William G. Cutler's HISTORY OF THE STATE OF [KANSAS](#):

On Wednesday, May 21, all was ready for the grand consummation to which all previous work had tended, and for which the Administration, the United States Senate, the Court, the Territorial Governor, the Southern States, and the Law and Order party of Western Missouri and Eastern Kansas had wrought unitedly, to wit, the silencing of the Free-state press, the destruction of the Free-state organization, and the vindictive chastening of Lawrence, as the citadel of insubordination against the laws they sought to force upon an unwilling people. The story has been oftener told than any other in the history of Kansas, and with less of contradiction as to the details. It would be but the repetition of a household tale to elaborate.

Early in the morning, the hostile forces gathered closer about the doomed town. A large force was stationed on Mount Oread, and cannon planted so as to cover and command the place. Gov. Robinson's house was taken as headquarters for the Marshal and the officers of his army. On every road leading to the town and on the opposite side of the river detachments of troops were posted to prevent the escape of fugitives from such justice as the Marshal and Sheriff Jones were now prepared to mete out. The forces mustered under two flags. The blood-red flag, on which was inscribed "Southern rights," floated side by side that day with the "stars and stripes." It was not so a few years later. There was no flag floating in Lawrence save an American flag, which fluttered lonesomely from its staff over the Free State Hotel.

Streets were unusually quiet. Nearly half the able-bodied men were absent - some were prisoners, some were hiding from arrest, and many ardent citizens, who had opposed the non-resistance policy of the Committee of Safety, had left in bitter disgust, scorning to witness, unresistingly, the humiliation that their enemies had prepared for them. The arms were hidden away, and



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the remaining citizens were quietly in pursuit of their daily avocations. The Committee of Safety were in session in their room on the second floor of the Free State Hotel, which had for the first time since its completion been open to guests on that day.

At 11 o'clock A. M., Deputy Marshal Fain, who had made two arrests in town the evening previous without resistance, again appeared with an unarmed guard of ten men. He drove directly to the hotel, where he summoned to act as his posse in serving his writs: Dr. Garvin, John A. Perry, C. W. Topliff, S. W. Eldridge and T. B. Eldridge. They readily, if not cheerfully, obeyed the summons. He arrested G. W. Deitzler, G. W. Smith and Gaius Jenkins, three of the Free-state men indicted by the grand jury for treason. No disturbance occurred and no resistance was made. Fain and his guard dined at the Free State Hotel, and shortly after departed with his prisoners without paying the bill. While in Lawrence, he was presented with a letter from the Committee of Safety, directed to his superior, which should have convinced him and all others who had doubt, that the Pro-slavery victory was complete. It read as follows:

LAWRENCE, K.T., May 21, 1856.

I.B. DONALDSON, UNITED STATES MARSHALL KANSAS TERRITORY:

WE, the Committee of Public Safety for the citizens of Lawrence, make this Statement and declaration to you, as Marshal of Kansas Territory,

That we represent the citizens of the United States and of Kansas, who acknowledge the constituted authorities of the Government, that we make no resistance to the execution of the law - National or Territorial - and claim it as law-abiding American citizens.

For the private property already taken by your posse, we ask indemnification, and what remains to us and our citizens we throw upon you for protection, trusting that under the [sic] flag of the Union, and within the folds of the Constitution, we may obtain safety.

SAMUEL C. POMEROY, C.W. BABCOCK,¹⁹ W.Y. ROBERTS, S.B. PRENTISS, LYMAN ALLEN, A.H. MALLORY, JOHN PERRY, JOEL GROVER.

On the return of Marshal Fain, with his prisoners, to headquarters, at Mount Oread, he announced to the soldiers the peaceful and successful issue of his work, that he had made his arrests, and that, as a posse in his service, their duties were at an end; but, he added, "Sheriff Jones, has writs yet to be served, and you are at liberty to organize as his posse, if you desire to do so."

Sheriff Jones, quite recovered from his fright and his wound,

19. Messrs. Babcock, Prentiss, Mallory and Grover repudiate the letter, and are reported as denying their signatures thereto attached.



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now rode forward, greeted by cordial congratulations and loud cheers, which assured him without further formality that the posse had cheerfully transferred its allegiance to him, and were ready and impatient to do his bidding. Leaving the main body at Mount Oread, Jones, at the head of twenty armed men, entered Lawrence at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. At the hotel he halted, called for Gen. Pomeroy, who speedily presented himself and shook hands with him. Recognizing him as a leading citizen, and as one who could act for the people of Lawrence, he demanded that the arms be given up. Five minutes were given to decide upon the proposition, and thirty minutes to stack the arms in the street. Failing to comply with the demand, he threatened to at once bombard the town. After a hurried consultation with members of the committee, still in session, Pomeroy offered in their name to surrender the cannon, but declined to give up the rifles, as they were private property, in the hands of individual owners, and in no manner under the control of the committee. Jones thereupon, under the direction of Mr. Pomeroy and others of the committee, was led to the spot where the cannon had been secreted (buried under the foundation of a house). It was unearthed and surrendered, together with a few muskets not in possession of individual owners. With these Jones left the town. Meantime the soldiers had marched down toward the village to the foot of the hill, and being formed in a hollow square, were listening to a drunken, maudlin harangue from ex-Senator Atchison, which began: "Boys, to-day I am a Kickapoo Ranger, by ----." Following this remarkable exordium, Atchison proceeded to inspire the boys with a just idea of the importance of the work they had in hand. As the ideas floated through his muddled brain he delivered them to his appreciative hearers, without order or coherence. He inculcated gallantry to the ladies, but, in case one should be found with arms in her hands, "trample her under foot as you would a snake." As the people of Lawrence had shown no resistance, it would not do to attack them, but should there by the least show of resistance, "show them no quarter." His speech was interrupted by the return of Jones, who, on the announcement that the cannon had been surrendered and the city was defenseless, was received with enthusiastic cheers. Atchison resumed: "And now, we will go in with our highly honorable Jones, and test the strength of that d--d Free-State Hotel. Be brave, be orderly, and if any man or woman stand in you way, blow them to ---- with a chunk of cold lead." The motley force then formed in line, and marched, under the lead of Jones, into the city, and commenced abating the indicated nuisances, by virtue of, and in obedience to, an order of the United States Court, issued by Chief Justice Samuel D. Lecompte. The two printing offices were first gutted, the presses destroyed, and the types thrown in the river. The semi-legal work was finished by destroying the Free State Hotel. The first shot fired at it from a cannon plated on the opposite side of Massachusetts street, was aimed by the tipsy Atchison, but



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failed to hit the building. About fifty shots were afterwards fired, with but little effect, upon the solid walls. Next it was attempted to blow it up. Several kegs of gunpowder were exploded within, with no appreciable damage to the walls. Its destruction was finally effected by the torch of the incendiary, and in the early evening it stood a roofless and smoldering ruin. The legal work was done. It was followed by petty robberies all through the defenseless and half-deserted town. Late in the evening the curtain fell, the last act being the burning of Gov. Robinson's private dwelling on Mount Oread, by the now irresponsible and lawless marauders, who had been released from all restraint when dismissed by the Sheriff.

Jones revenge was complete. As the work of destruction went on, he was in ecstasy. "This," said he, "is the happiest moment of my life. I determined to make the fanatics bow before me in the dust and kiss the Territorial laws." As the walls of the burning hotel fell, he ejaculated, "I have done it, by ----, I have done it." Turning to the soldiers, he said, "You are dismissed, the writs have been executed."

The loss to the citizens of Lawrence and the Emigrant Aid Company, who owned the Free State Hotel, was estimated at \$150,000. The loss of the outside settlers in the vicinity of the invaders from the forced requisitions made upon them for subsistence of the army, and the robberies committed, was in some cases well-nigh ruinous. The aggregate loss to the citizens of Douglas County could not have fallen short of \$200,000.

The loss of life was summed up in the murder of two Free-state men, Brown and Stewart, and in the death of one Law and Order man, who was accidentally killed by a brick or stone which fell from the burning hotel. Two other members of the posse were wounded; one, by the accidental discharge of his own gun; the other, by being thrown from his horse while in pursuit of a Free-state man whom he had mistaken for Gov. Reeder.

On the following day, the main body of troops began to disperse. Some companies marched to Leavenworth and Atchison; a part of the force returned to Westport and the Missouri towns from whence it had come. Many stragglers, who had been attached to no particular organization, hovered about the vicinity, stealing from the farmers horses, cattle, and whatever else was required to satisfy their not over frugal wants. A small force remained at Leecompton for the ostensible purpose of guarding the prisoners against any possible attempt at rescue on the part of their friends.

That the non-resistant attitude of Lawrence during the trying seasons was voluntary, and not incited by abject fear or actual defenselessness, is evinced by the fact that there were ready to march to her assistance, from Topeka and many other towns, well-organized and well-armed companies of Free-state men, in sufficient numbers to be formidable to the invading force in the open field, and to have successfully defended Lawrence from within. All such proffered aid was refused, and, at the close



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of the siege, despite the loss of property and the humiliation, a moral victory had been won. Lawrence had offered no resistance to the laws, and had thus robbed the outrageous affair of all possible justification in the eyes of a civilized and liberty-loving people. She had not been conquered, for she had not resisted. Her people were not subdued, but oppressed and outraged for opinion's sake. They bided patiently their time. Would that others with burdens less grievous might have shown like patient restraint. The anti-slavery press was silenced; the Free-state leaders imprisoned; and Lawrence humbled and unresistingly subservient to all behests of the Territorial authorities. Nevertheless, those conditions, so ardently desired by the Law and Order party, brought not even momentary peace to the distracted country; on the contrary, it proved the beginning of aggressive warfare on the part of the Free-state settlers, who, up to that time, while boldly denying the validity or binding force of the Territorial laws, had studiously avoided open conflict with the authorities by passively ignoring them. As a means of establishing peace, the determined efforts of those in authority to force the citizens of Lawrence into a position of abject allegiance, although a seeming success, proved a dismal failure.

Besides those who remained at Lecompton, and straggling parties not identified by any known commander, Capt. H. Clay Pate, and Coleman, the murderer of Dow, with quite a numerous force of Westport rowdies, known as the Shannon Sharp-shooters, remained encamped on the Wakarusa, between Franklin and Fish's store. Fish was a Free-state man, and it was believed he kept gunpowder to sell or give to his friends. Although the war was over, the company camped near by, prowled about the vicinity threatening to destroy the store, stopping and insulting Free-state men, supplying their wants by theft or forced contributions from the inhabitants. On the second day after their encampment, they were somewhat astonished and disgusted at a raid made into their camp by some parties, evidently not entirely friendly to them, who succeeded in capturing and making off with three valuable horses; on the next night a party from the camp going up the California road were fired into from a thicket and several wounded. They retreated precipitately to camp, leaving several horses and some arms as booty for their unseen assailants. On the same or the succeeding night a Pro-slavery man who kept a store in the log house on the California road, was robbed by a party of Free-state men of his goods and horses. It was evident that reprisals were being made on the Pro-slavery men, and that a regular guerrilla war had begun. A party attacked a house in Lecompton where some of the arms taken at Lawrence had been stored, together with some powder and other articles belonging to the Pro-slavery men. The occupants made no resistance, and the raiders made off with their booty. In three days after the great Law and Order victory at Lawrence, the whole surrounding country seemed infested with Free-state guerrillas who robbed



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and plundered the Pro-slavery settlers, and harassed the Law and Order troops without mercy. Between the two sets of marauders, the unarmed inhabitants, whether Pro-slavery or otherwise, stood equal chances of being plundered.

Even Gov. Shannon did not escape. Two valuable horses were stolen from him, and pressed into the Free-state service, whereupon His Excellency waxed wroth, and ordered the United States Dragoons, then stationed at Lecompton and at Lawrence, to patrol duty in the surrounding country. They rode the country up and down, but made no captures. He took the field himself, and, in company with his friend, Col. Titus, and members of his force, made a reconnoissance [sic]. He visited the residences of both Free-state and Pro-slavery settlers on the line of his march, threatening the one and reassuring the other in his official capacity. His efforts only served to show to both his friends and enemies his utter demoralization and incompetency as Governor of the Territory at that time. Henceforth, until the time of his removal, he was entirely under control of the Pro-slavery element, making the prevailing confusion worse confounded by the imbecility of his administration.

THE POTTAWATOMIE MURDERS. THE CROWNING HORROR.

The news of the trouble at Lawrence, and her threatened destruction by the Southern soldiery, came to Osawatomie on the evening of June 21. Immediately, on receipt of the information, the Pottawatomie Rifles, a Free-state company under the command of John Brown, Jr., set out for the scene of disturbance. The Osawatomie company, Capt. Dayton, joined them, and together they reached "Ottawa Jones" on the morning of the 22d. There they first heard of the sack of the town, and the arrest of Deitzler, Brown and Jenkins. They, however, continued their march toward Lawrence, not knowing but their assistance might still be needed, and encamped at night "up the Ottawa Creek, near the residence of Capt. Shore." They remained in the vicinity until afternoon of the 23d, at which time they decided to return home. About noon on the 23d, Old John Brown, whose indignation was at fever heat, selected a party to go with him on a private expedition. They separated from the main party, ground their sabers, and having completed their preparations, left the camp together. Capt. John Brown, Jr., objected to their leaving his company, but, seeing his father was obdurate, silently acquiesced, with the timely caution to him to "do nothing rash." The company consisted of Old John Brown, four of his sons - Frederick, Owen, Watson, Oliver- Henry Thompson, his son-in-law, Thomas Winer and James Townsley, whom Old John had induced to carry the party in his wagon to their proposed field of operations.

They left the camp at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon of the 23d. They were met toward sundown of that day between Pottawatomie Creek and Middle Creek, and but a few miles from



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the Doyle settlement, by Col. J. Blood, then on his way from Osawatomie to Lawrence.²⁰ The party halted on meeting Col. Blood, and a conversation ensued between him and John Brown, none of the other members of the party speaking. Brown gave him an account of the sacking of Lawrence, and the arrest of the Free-state men, denounced the members of the non-resistant committee as cowards, and seemed in a frenzied state of excitement. As they parted, he requested Col. Blood not to mention the meeting, "as they were on a secret expedition, and did not want any one to know that they were in that neighborhood."

They encamped that night between two deep ravines on the edge of the timber, some distance to the right of the main traveled road, about one mile above "Dutch Henry's crossing." There they remained unobserved until the following evening (Saturday, June 24). Some time after dark, the party left their place of hiding and proceeded on their "secret expedition." Late in the evening, they called at the house of James P. Doyle, and ordered him and his two sons, William and Drury, to go with them as prisoners. They followed their captors out into the darkness. They next called at the house of Allen Wilkinson and ordered him out. He also obeyed; thence, crossing the Pottawatomie, they came to the house of Henry Sherman (Dutch Henry). He was not at home. They, however, arrested and took along with them William, his brother. They returned to the ravine where they had previously encamped, and there spent the quiet Sabbath morning, then broke camp and rejoined the Osawatomie company some time during Sunday night, it being at that time encamped near Ottawa Jones'. The secret expedition was ended. Was it successful? Where were the prisoners? Had they escaped?

Old man Doyle and his sons were left in the road a short distance from their house. They were cut, mangled, stabbed - some say shot - it didn't matter to the Doyles - they were dead.

Sherman was left in the creek, near his brother's house. He was hacked upon the breast and hand, his skull split open, and, from the wounds, the brains oozed out into the muddy water. It did not matter to Sherman - he was dead.

Yes, the secret expedition had proved successful.

The persons who had thus suddenly gone to their long account were all believed to be Pro-slavery men of the most violent and intolerant type, of whom the Free-State settlers stood in constant dread.

The news of the horrid affair spread rapidly over the Territory, carrying with it a thrill of horror, such as the people, used as they had become to deeds of murder, had not felt before. Hitherto, in most cases ending in homicide or murder, the Free-State man had proved the victim. The crimes had been perpetrated in open day, and were often the outcome of an angry encounter or brawl between men of equal nerve and determination, both

20. The statements concerning this meeting are given on the authority of a letter from Col. Blood to G. W. Brown, dated November 29, 1879.



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armed, or in the company of armed companions. Under these circumstances, these unavenged murders, numerous and atrocious as they were, lacked the ghastly horror of this silent, stealthy, midnight massacre of defenseless men. The news of the event had a deeper significance than appeared in the abstract atrocity of the act itself.

It meant that, when Gov. Shannon, to the committee, pleading for the safety of Lawrence, replied, "War, by ----," there were men outside of Lawrence, and beyond the control of the committee of public safety, who had taken him at his word. It meant that the policy of extermination or abject submission, so blatantly promulgated by the Pro-slavery press, and proclaimed by Pro-slavery speakers, had been adopted by their enemies, and was about to be enforced with appalling earnestness. It meant that there was a power opposed to the Pro-slavery aggressors, as cruel and unrelenting as themselves. It meant henceforth, swift retaliation - robbery for robbery - murder for murder - that "he who taketh the sword shall perish by the sword." It meant that the merciless and implacable spirit of retributive vengeance, hitherto held in restraint, had broken its leash and begun its dreadful work.

The aggressive warfare thus begun, was not in accordance with the plans or purposes of the leaders of the Free-State movement; on the contrary, it was in direct opposition to their counsel, and had been persistently decried and successfully restrained up to this time. For the disorders that ensued, the Free-State organization was in no manner responsible. The aggressive movement at that time begun, was an uncontrollable outburst of rage long pent up, under the stress of suffering, intimidation, insult, humiliation, and unredressed outrage, such as, by hot-tempered men of courage, could no longer be unresistingly endured.

Upon those high in authority and wielding powerful influence, who, with deliberate purpose, counseled, planned, and executed the outrages, which at last culminated in all the horrors of anarchy, the responsibility rests for all time to come; to them, history accords the infamous distinction which their deeds merit.

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After the attack on Lawrence in the [Kansas Territory](#), a proslavery grand jury indicted many free state men, including in their indictment the "Free State Hotel" in Lawrence. In accordance with the indictments of this grand jury, Pierce being a proslavery president, the US Cavalry, acting to implement the agendas of the proslavery party, arrested 2 of [John Brown](#)'s sons. [John Brown, Jr.](#) was required to trot, on foot, with his arms tied behind him, ahead of a cavalry company, the 9 miles to [Osawatimie](#).



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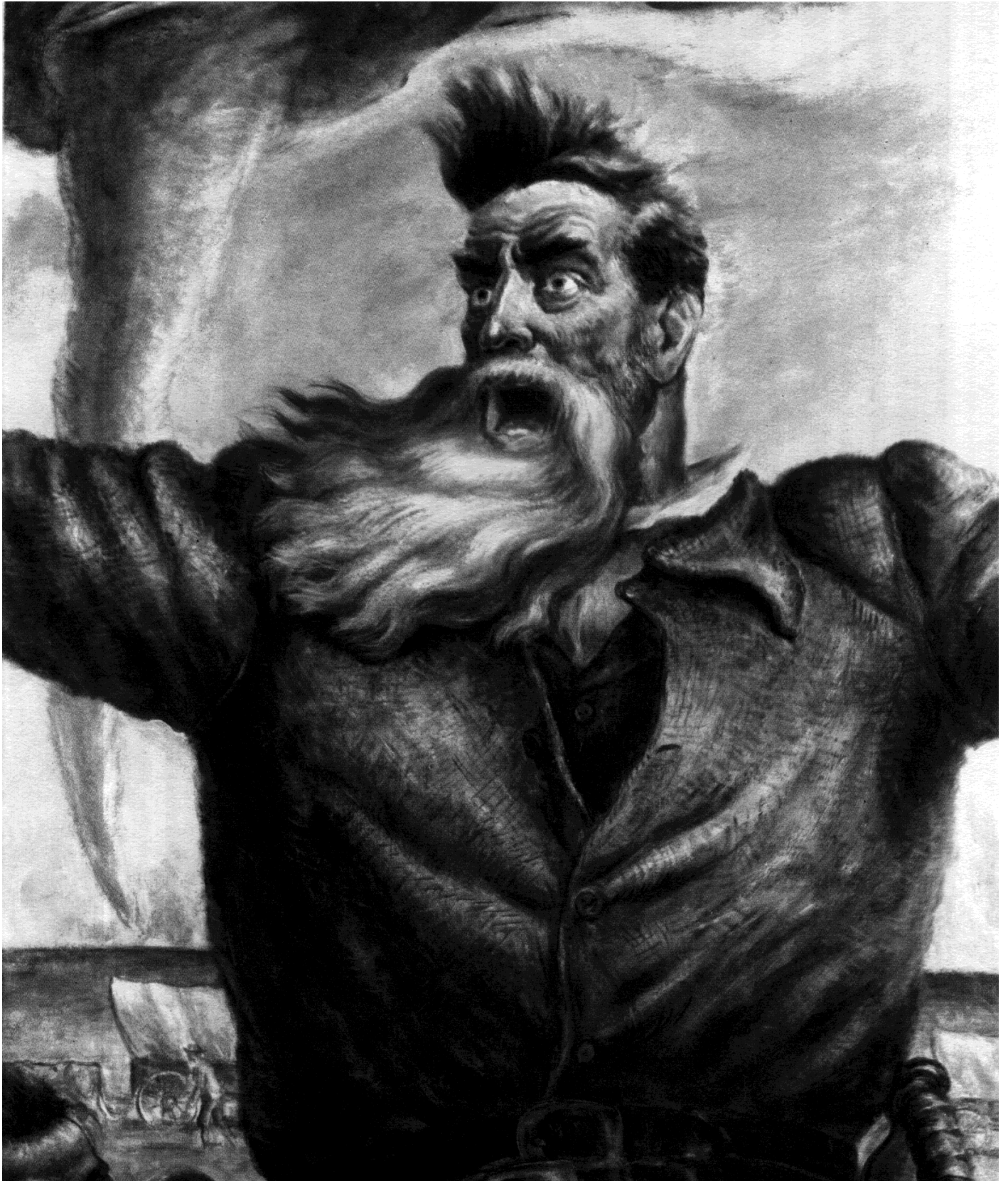
May 23, Friday: When informed of the burning of the town of [Lawrence](#) in the [Kansas Territory](#), Captain [John Brown](#) went from his cabin into the forest to “converse with God.”



When he returned, it was to order his sons to sharpen the broadswords they had procured in Ohio. Captain Brown and his little band of [Osawatomie](#) faithful led by God, carrying surveying equipment to mask their sacred duty, set off on their little expedition to use the latest thing in efficient slaughter, the Sharps rifles known as “Beecher’s Bibles” largely donated to them by the congregation of the Reverend [Henry Ward Beecher](#), to good effect.

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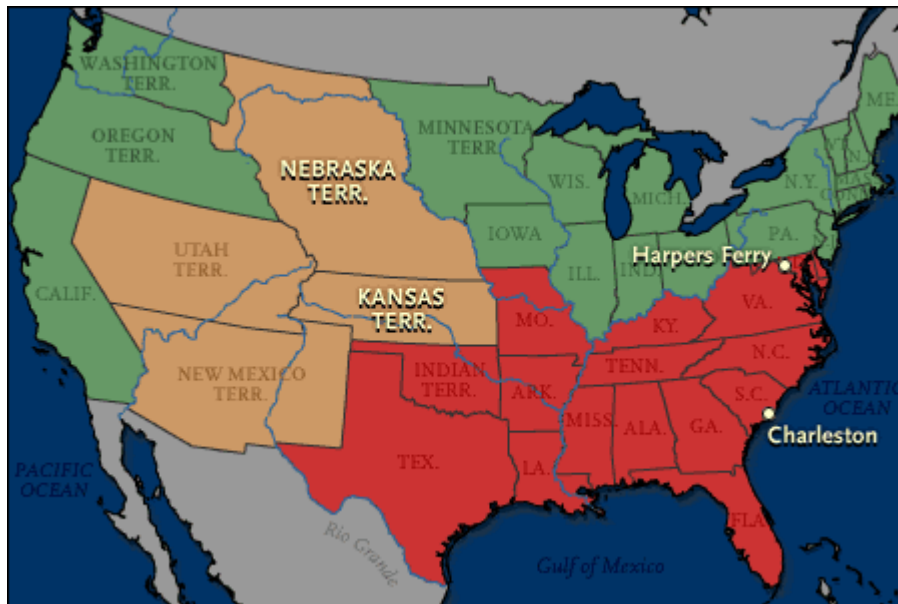
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A Catholic family of six, that of James P. Doyle, had ventured from Tennessee into the Kansas Territory for the same reason that the New England Emigrant Aid Company was encouraging white people to travel to the Kansas Territory from New England — that is, in order to “get to a free state where there would be no slave labor to hinder white men from making a fair day’s wage.” In other words, this family consisted of, or



conceived that it consisted of, economic refugees fleeing from the unfair competition of America’s people of color. They had been building themselves an isolated cabin on the bank of Pottawatomie Creek, about a march from the cluster of cabins known as Brown’s Station, and this midnight visit was the Brown party’s first stop on their quest for revenge for the burning of Lawrence. The evidence against Doyle, of course, was that he spoke with a Southern drawl. According to Edmund Wilson’s PATRIOTIC GORE:²¹

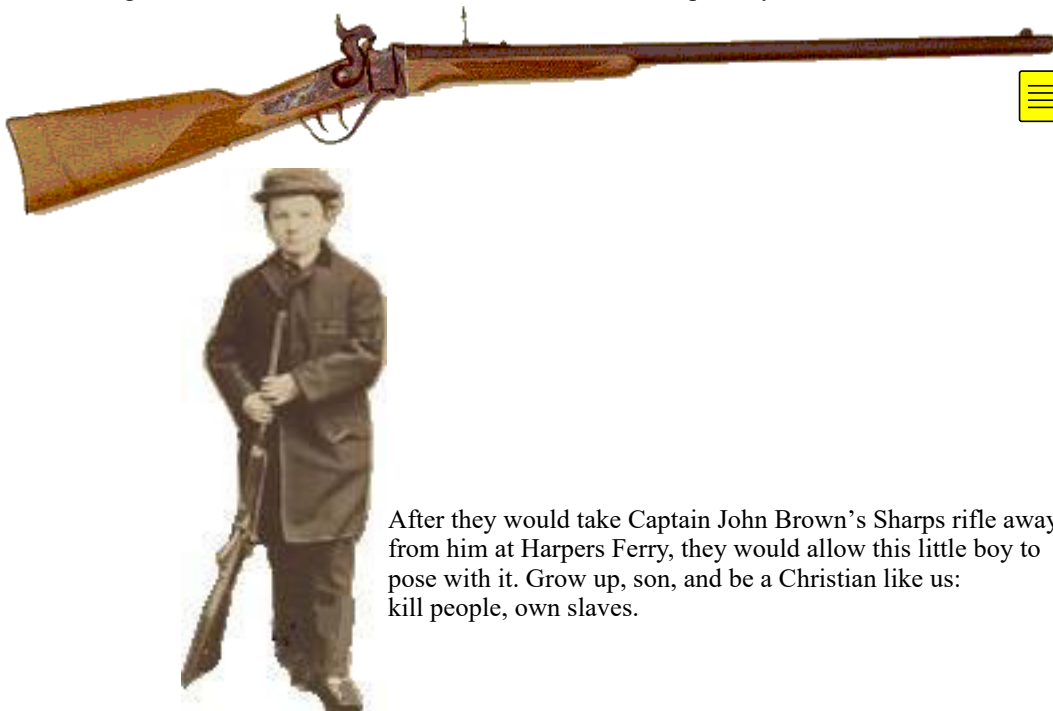
The murdered boys and their father were part of a family of illiterate poor whites who had emigrated from Tennessee in order to get away, precisely, from the competition of slave labor, and none of these people owned slaves. But Brown, who had circulated among them in his role of land surveyor, had previously satisfied himself that “each one had committed murder in his heart, and, according to the Scriptures... were guilty of murder, and I felt justified in having them killed.”

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Sparing Mahala Doyle and her young daughter, and a son who was but 14 years of age, Brown would order Doyle and the two adult sons, William age 22 and Drury age 20, out of the cabin into the dark yard. The vengeance party would split open their heads with the cutlasses (I have no indication as to whether they

21. Richard F. Teichgraber III has commented that Henry Thoreau’s deep contempt for newspapers would have caused him to disbelieve or ignore the reports of John Brown’s massacre on Pottawatomie Creek. I do not agree. Thoreau’s contempt for news reports was in fact an entirely selective contempt.

allowed these Catholics to say their rosaries first). For some reason, perhaps an attempt at resistance, Drury Doyle's arms would get themselves hacked off. Then the party would go on down along the creek, and an hour later they would be able to kill an actual proslavery person, Allen Wilkinson, and steal his horses, in the presence of his sick wife and several of their young children. Afterward they would go back to the family's barn and take saddles for these horses. Riding on down the bank of Pottawatomie Creek, they would discover a William Sherman, cutting off his left hand "except a little piece of skin" and splitting open his head and leaving him lying in the water, confiscating his horse and bowie knife. A nice night's work for nightriders for justice, doing God's work in the world! This affair would be complete by the 26th.



After they would take Captain John Brown's Sharps rifle away from him at Harpers Ferry, they would allow this little boy to pose with it. Grow up, son, and be a Christian like us: kill people, own slaves.

During the "Indian War" in the Rogue River Valley of Oregon, John Beeson, a Methodist, had made himself an outspoken advocate for the Indians, and against the slaughter and atrocities committed by the whites. On this day he needed to flee from his homestead due to threats from the surrounding community of white people (my information is that both the local newspaper and the local minister were talking up the idea of holding a tar-and-feathers party with him as the guest of honor, and that this caused him to feel that he needed to sneak away in the middle of the night). He would not feel safe in returning to Oregon for more than a decade.²² During that period he would publish A PLEA FOR THE INDIANS ... and lecture across the eastern United States as an advocate for native American rights.

PLEA FOR THE INDIANS



May 23. P.M. — To Heywood Spring.

Sorrel well open on west side of railroad causeway against H. Wheeler's land. Noticed the earliest willow catkins turned to masses of cotton yesterday; also a little of the mouse-ear down begins to be loose. Hear often

22. Evidently, however, he would manage to hold onto the family claim to the homestead land along Wagner Creek.



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and distinctly, apparently from H. Wheeler's black spruce wood-lot, the *phe phee-ar* of the new muscicapa. Red-eye and wood thrush. Houstonias whiten the fields, and looked yesterday like snow, a sugaring of snow, on the side of Lee's Hill. Heard partridges drum yesterday and to-day. Observed the pads yesterday just begun to spread out on the surface with wrinkled edges and here and there a bullet-like bud; the red white lily pads still more rare as yet.

The stellaria at Heywood Spring must be the same with that near the E. Hosmer Spring, though the former has commonly fewer styles and rather slenderer leaves. It appears to be the *S. borealis*, though the leaves are *narrowly* lanceolate; has three to seven styles; a few petals (cleft almost to the bottom) or none; pods, some larger than the calyx and apparently ten-ribbed; petals, now about the length of the sepals.

After sunset on river.

A warm summer-like night. A bullfrog trumps once. A large devil's-needle goes by after sundown. The ring of toads is loud and incessant. It seems more prolonged than it is. I think it not more than two seconds in each case. At the same time I hear a low, stertorous, dry, but hard-cored note from some frog in the meadows and along the riverside; often heard in past years but not accounted for. Is it a *Rana palustris*?

Dor-bugs hum in the yard, — and were heard against the windows some nights ago. The cat is springing into the air for them.

CAT

May 24, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed Mrs. Whitman's Haverhill cemetery lots.



A story by [Louisa May Alcott](#) appeared in Boston's [Saturday Evening Gazette](#), entitled "Mabel's May Day."

That night Captain [John Brown](#) and his men went to nearby Pottawatomie Creek and he directed his men in the cold-blooded murder of 5 proslavery settlers. One of the men that "St. John the Just"²³ Brown had hacked to pieces with broadswords was an unarmed settler named James Doyle.²⁴ Here is his widow speaking:

"When [we] went to Kansas, ... it was to get to a free state where there would be no slave labor to hinder white men from making a fair day's wages; [he] never owned any slaves, never expected to, nor did not want any."

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What had been going around was coming around! —It appears that they considered that they were needing to kill exactly 5-count 'em-5 because their statistics were that a total of 5-count 'em-5 free-state settlers had been killed since the outbreak of factional violence in the [Kansas Territory](#) in late 1855. In addition, it seems they felt that they were taking vengeance for the beating of Senator [Charles Sumner](#), as well as for the burning of several buildings in [Lawrence](#) on May 21st by an armed band of pro-slavery Missourians. —An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, that sort of thingie.



May 24. Pratt gave me the wing of a sparrow (?) hawk which he shot some months ago. He was coming from his house to his shop early in the morning when he saw this small hawk, which looked like a pigeon, fly past him over the Common with a sparrow in his clutches, and alight about six feet up the south buttonwood in front of Tolman's. Having a small Maynard's revolver in his pocket, loaded with a ball size of a pea, he followed, and, standing twenty-two paces from the tree in the road, aimed and brought down both hawk and sparrow at a distance of about six rods, cutting off the wing of the former with the ball. Thus he confessed he




23. So denominated by [Bronson Alcott](#).

24. [James Redpath](#) would interview Captain [John Brown](#) just days after this massacre at Pottawatomie Creek. He was to become Brown's most fervent publicist.



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could not do again if he should try a hundred tunes. It must be a sparrow hawk, according to Wilson and Nuttall, for the inner vanes of the primaries and secondaries are thickly spotted with brownish white. Humphrey Buttrick says that he hears the note of the woodcock [**American Woodcock**  *Scolopax minor*] from the village in April and early in May (too late now); that there were some this year breeding or singing; by the riverside in front of Abel Heywood's. He says that when you see one spring right up straight into the air, you may go to the spot, and he will surely come down again after some minutes to within a few feet of the same spot and of you. Has known a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse**  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] to fly at once from one to two miles after being wounded (tracked them by the blood) without alighting. Says he has caught as many as a dozen partridges  in his hands. He lies right down on them, or where he knows them to be, then passes his hands back and forth under his body till he feels them. You must not lift your body at all or they will surely squeeze out, and when you feel one must be sure you get hold of their legs or head, and not feathers merely. To-day is suddenly overpoweringly warm. Thermometer at 1 P.M., 94° in the shade! but in the afternoon it suddenly fell to 56, and it continued cold the next two days.



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May 25, Sunday: [Waldo Emerson](#)'s 53d birthday.



[Lysander Spooner](#) wrote to George Bradburn about having filed for a patent:

I have great confidence that it is going to be valuable. I wish I had the money for it now, that I might give my attention to other things. The world is "famishing for lack of knowledge," which I could give them; and I every day reproach myself for being engaged in such commonplace business as making money, or getting a living.... If I should establish a good reputation for beds and chairs, that may prove such a stepping stone to public favor, that I may hope to resume my profession of author, philosopher, reformer, and oracle.

Edward Bridgman had grown up in [Northampton](#) and at age 22 migrated to "[Bleeding Kansas](#)". He came simply to homestead but was soon caught up in the struggle over slavery. He described his arrival at



[Osawatomie](#) and the destruction of the town of [Lawrence](#) by proslavery forces, and the retaliation led by [John Brown](#) at Pottawatomie Creek, in which 5 men from the South had been killed. Several months after [Lawrence](#) was sacked, a group of proslavery men would attack Osawatomie and Bridgman would fight alongside Captain Brown. Several months later he would return to Massachusetts to sign up with the 37th Massachusetts infantry. In the early 1870s he would migrate again, this time to northern Wisconsin. In 1901 he would move into the city of Madison, where he would reside until his death in 1915.

*Dear Cousin Sidney
I write now to let you know my present situation and a little about the affairs of Kansas....*





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In some small towns the men are called up nearly every night to hold themselves in readiness to meet the worst as scouting parties of Alabamians Georgians and Missourians are around continually, plundering clothes yards, horses and cattle, and everything they can lay hold of. A few miles from Lawrence a man was plowing. A party of Southerners came along and being hungry killed his best ox, ate what they wanted, took away some and left the rest. Such like occurrences are almost daily taking place. Last Thursday, news came from Lawrence that she was in the hands of the Ruffians, and that they had demolished the free state Hotel, burned Robinson's house, and destroyed the two printing presses. Almost immediately a company of 30 was raised. There was no reason why I could not go for one, so I borrowed a rifle and ammunition and joined them. The thought of engaging in battle is not a pleasing one, but the free state men are compelled to. Why should I not do [so] as well as others, I have nothing to hinder me and my life is no dearer to me than the lives of others are to them. At sundown we divided into 2 divisions and took turns in walking. It was really affecting to see husbands and wives bid each other good bye. – not knowing as they would ever see each other again. yet the feeling and sympathies of the women are as much enlisted in the cause as the men. It is nothing uncommon to see them running bullets and making cartridges. One woman yesterday told me that she had often been called up nights to make them....

Tuesday, 27.

Since I wrote the above the Osawatomie company has returned to O. as news came that we could do nothing immediately, so we returned back. On our way back we heard that 5 men had been killed by Free State men. the men were butchered – ears cut off and the bodies thrown into the river[.] the murdered men (Proslavery) had thrown out threats and insults, yet the act was barbarous and inhuman whoever committed by[.] we met the men going when we were going up and knew that they were on a secret expedition, yet didn't know what it was. Tomorrow something will be done to arrest them. there were 8 concerned in the act. perhaps they had good motives, some think they had, how that is I dont know. The affairs took place 8 miles from Osawatomie. The War seems to have commenced in real earnest. Horses are stolen on all sides whenever they can be taken....

Weds eve.

Since yesterday I have learned that those men who committed those murders were a party of Browns. one of



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them was formerly in the wool business in Springfield, John Brown[.] his son, (Jn) has been taken today, tho he had no hand in the act, but was knowing to it, but when I write to Maria I will give further particulars[.] Osawatomie is in much fear and excitement[.] News came tonight that a co. of Georgians and Alibamians were coming to make this their headquarters. All work is nearly suspended, the women are in constant fear[.] It was really pleasing to witness the reception of our co. by the women after they came in to O. [I]t was a little after dark. A long line of women and children stood by the roadside to greet us and joy was depicted on every countenance. hands were heartily shaken and congratulations offered[.] but I must close....
Yours truly, E
It wont be best for me to write my name so you must guess who wote this[.] but very few now attach their full name to a letter

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

June 2, Monday: An antislavery splinter faction of the [Know-Nothing](#) party met in [New-York](#) and nominated [John Charles Frémont](#) and Pennsylvania's W.F. Johnston. They advocated a free [Kansas Territory](#), that is, a land in which only white people would be allowed.

According to a roadside marker on US 56 east of Baldwin in Douglas County, [Kansas](#), the "[battle of Black Jack](#)" on this day had amounted to:

part of the struggle to make Kansas a free state. In May 1856, proslavery men destroyed buildings and newspaper presses in Lawrence, Free-State headquarters. John Brown's company then killed five proslavery men on Pottawatomie creek not far from this spot. In retaliation Henry C. Pate raided near-by Palmyra and took three prisoners. Early on the morning of June 2 Brown attacked Pate's camp in a grove of black jack oaks about 1/4 mile south of this sign. Both sides had several wounded and numerous desertions before Pate and 28 men surrendered, Brown claiming he had only 15 men left. As evidence of [civil war](#) this fight received much publicity and excited both North and South.

Erected by the Kansas State Historical Society and State Highway Commission.

[Luke Fisher Parsons](#) 1st met [John Brown](#) at the [Battle of Black Jack](#). Three Jews who had a store together in [Lawrence, Kansas](#) were also in [Captain Brown](#)'s group at this engagement:

- Jacob Benjamin, originally from Bohemia, died 1866
- Theodore Wiener, immigrant from Poland, died 1906. Although Wiener would be described by Bondi as "a rank pro-slavery man" he needed John Brown's help to oust a squatter on his claim.



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- [August Bondi](#), who as a lad in Vienna had taken part in the 1848 revolution, and who would enlist in the Kansas cavalry and serve as a 1st sergeant

Bondi would later write that the 3 of them were “[Free-State](#) men,” which he would explain meant that they were hostile to any “increase in the colored population.” They were taking part in this fighting, he wrote, out of “antipathy at the degradation of labor” (of course, what they meant was white labor) — certainly not out of any “sympathy with the negro slave.” According to this record Bondi was alongside [Captain Brown](#) and ahead of the other men, going up a hill while under fire.²⁵

We walked with bent backs, nearly crawled, that the tall dead grass of the year before might somehow by courtesy hide us from the Border Ruffian marksmen, yet the bullets kept whistling.... Weiner puffed like a steamboat, hurrying behind me. I called out to him “*Nu, was meinen Sie jetzt?*” (“Now what do you think of American this?”). His answer, “*Sof odom muves*” (a Hebrew phrase meaning “the end of man is death” or, in modern Jewish phraseology, “I guess we are up against it”).

25. Bernard Postal and Lionel Koppman. GUESS WHO’S JEWISH IN AMERICAN HISTORY. Shapolsky Publishers, 1988, pages 34-5



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[John E. Cook](#) 1st met Captain [John Brown](#) after this battle of Black Jack.



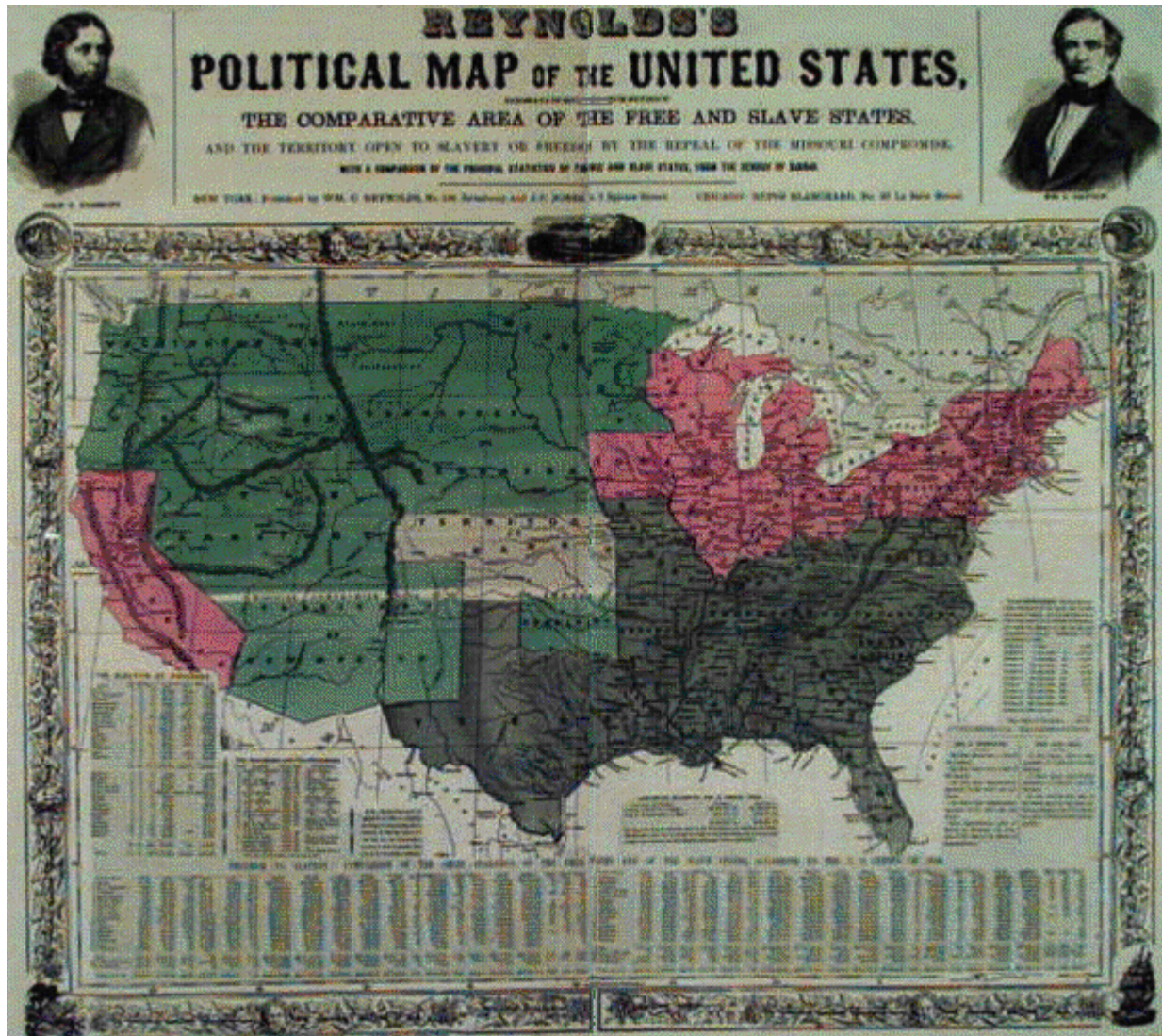
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Jason Brown took part, but clearly he would have trepidations, for he would refuse to join his father at the raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry.

June 2, Monday: Per [Waldo Emerson](#) this was “the finest day, high noon of the year.” He and [Henry Thoreau](#) rode in a wagon to Perez Blood’s auction and found his [telescope](#) sold for \$55.⁰⁰ which had “cost ninety-five plus ten.”²⁶

Thoreau noted that according to Professor [Louis Agassiz](#), the intestinal worms in the mouse are not developed except in the stomach of the cat.²⁷

He also noted that according to [Sir David Brewster](#)’s biography of Sir [Isaac Newton](#), with one of the early telescopes it had been possible to read from [Philosophical Transactions](#) at a distance of five hundred feet.

BREWSTER’S NEWTON

ASTRONOMY



June 2. *Carum*, i.e. caraway, in garden. Saw most hummingbirds when cherries were in bloom, — on them.

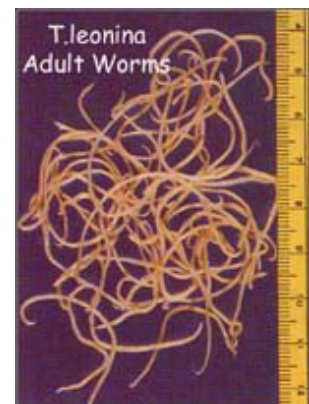
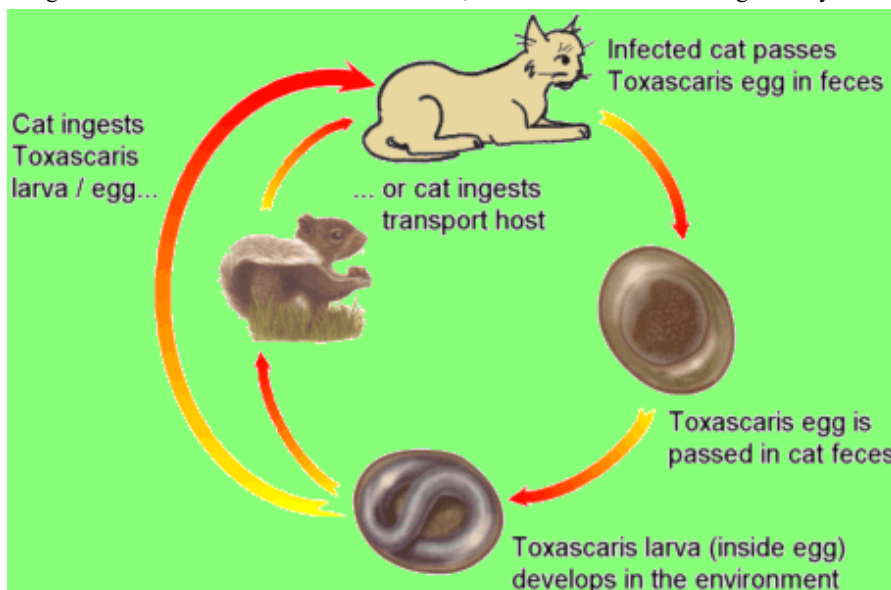
P. M. — With R.W. E. to Perez Blood’s auction.

Telescope sold for fifty-five dollars; cost ninety-five plus ten. See Camilla on rye, undulating light and shade; not 19th of April.²⁸ Returned by bridle-road. *Myrica cerifera*, possibly yesterday. Very few buds shed pollen yet; more, probably, to-day. Leaves nearly an inch long, and shoot and all no more. English hawthorn will open apparently in two days.

Agassiz tells his class that the intestinal worms in the mouse are not developed except in the stomach of the cat.

26. A couple of years earlier, Henry’s telescope had cost him \$8, more than a week’s wages, the equivalent of perhaps \$800 today. Blood’s telescope would in today’s money have been a device costing in the range of \$10,000, a number of months’ salary.

27. When a carnivore ingests an infected prey animal, the larvae of the *Toxascaris leonina* roundworms mature within the walls and lumen of the predator’s small intestine. When the female worm becomes an adult, it lays eggs which pass with the feces. The eggs become infective some 3-6 days after defecation, and rodents such as mice and squirrels become infected when they consume something that has been in contact with these feces. The the eggs hatch within the rodent’s digestive system and the larvae migrate through its tissues. When the rodent is consumed, larvae are released in the digestive system of the carnivore and the cycle repeats.



28. Thoreau here alludes to the Concord memory that on the memorable day of April 19th, 1775, the spring having been exceptionally early, grass and grain were already high enough to be bending with the breeze.



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5 P.M. — To *Azalea nudiflora*, which is in prime. *Ranunculus recurvatus* the same; how long? White maple keys conspicuous.

In the first volume of Brewster's "Life of Newton" I read that with one of the early telescopes they could read the "Philosophical Transactions" at five hundred feet distance.

August 7, Thursday: Eva Evelina E. Vannevar Slack posted an account of her travel to Charles Wesley Slack.

When Lane's Army of the North marched into "[Bleeding Kansas](#)", [Aaron D. Stevens](#) met [John Brown](#) at the Nebraska line. He would become a devoted follower.

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THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





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August 30, Saturday/31, Sunday: [Frederick Brown](#) (2) was gunned down by Border Ruffians guided by the Reverend Martin White, on the doorstep of his sister Florilla Brown Adair and the Reverend Samuel L. Adair, at [Osawatomie](#) in the [Kansas Territory](#) (the Reverend would boast that it had been he himself who had fired the fatal shot, and explain that this had been warranted because Brown was not only a known abolitionist, but also

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a horse thief).



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[Luke Fisher Parsons](#) participated in this battle of [Osawatimie](#). [Jason Brown](#) and [Salmon Brown](#) also participated, but clearly they developed trepidations for they would refuse to join their father [John Brown](#) at the raid on the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#) ([Parsons](#) also would fail to show up, although after the fact he would always offer plausible-sounding excuses).

On August 19, 1856 the Reverend Richard B. Foster of Osborne county in the [Kansas Territory](#) had written from Lawrence to his brother, the Reverend [Daniel Foster](#) in Lowell, Massachusetts, and on this day the contents of that letter were presented in the town's [Journal and Courier](#):

RICHARD B. FOSTER'S STATEMENT.



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I was a participant in three glorious affairs which took place in this Territory last week, to wit: At Franklin on the 12th, at Washington on the 15th, and at Titus's camp, near Lecompton, on the 16th. First, let me say that war is a terrible thing. I have before heard of it: I have now seen it. I have heard the balls whistling about my ears. I have stood where men were shot down as you would shoot wild beasts. I have heard the groans of the wounded and dying. I have seen the bloody corpses of the dead, and truly war is a terribly cruel thing. Still, war is preferable to slavery. But to the facts: Since the cessation of hostilities in June, Buford's gang, who came to "see Kansas through," have been busy fortifying themselves at different points in block-houses, in squads of from twenty-five to fifty in a place. These gentry are above working for a living. They depend upon the contributions of Southern aid societies — they have eked out their means of subsistence by depredations upon the Free-State men. Their most common mode is stealing horses, which they run off to the border counties of Missouri and sell. Any kind of plunder, however, when the odds are ten to one in their favor, is in their line. The most outrageous and reckless of these bands was collected in a camp and log fort near Lecompton, under Col. Titus, of the Territorial militia, who is, with good reason, suspected of having been formerly a pirate on the coast of Florida. The Free-State boys had for some time brooded over a plan for breaking up these dens of thieves. Last Tuesday, the 12th of August, Maj. Hoyt, one of the most highly esteemed and honorable citizens of Lawrence, went into one of the camps on Washington creek, which was under the command of Capt. Saunders. He went without any arms, as a Free-Mason, upon the invitation of Saunders, a brother Mason. He was received with apparent kindness, and on leaving was accompanied by two men, who shot him in a piece of woods. They lodged two balls in his body, and then shot him after he had fallen, through the head. They put some corrosive substance upon his face to disfigure him, and returned with his horse and effects.

This act set the train on fire. The Lawrence boys determined to disperse these scoundrels, and recover some of their stolen property. That evening we started from Lawrence, i.e., 25 horsemen and 56 footmen. On arriving at Franklin, the first point of attack, we found the enemy had been apprised of our expedition, and were prepared to give us a warm reception. Their log fort was flanked on the one side by another log building, in which was kept the post office, and on the other by a large hotel. We could make no impression upon



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them with our rifles, and they refused to surrender. We were determined, however, to recover our cannon, which we wanted for routing these nests of land pirates. We accordingly surrounded the fort, and commenced a brisk firing with Sharp's rifles, which they vigorously returned. This continued about three hours. One of our men was killed, and several wounded. We then loaded a wagon with hay, backed it against the post office, and set it on fire. When the flames burst forth, the poltroons cried lustily for quarter. We then extinguished the fire, the enemy in the meantime making good their escape. They left in our hands the cannon, and upwards of fifty muskets. We took our own arms again, and emptied upon the ground several barrels of whisky, and went on our way. The citizens of Franklin took no part in this attack.

The night had passed in this engagement at Franklin. We had now to prepare balls for the cannon, and we were not ready to proceed to Saunders's till Friday. We marched upon his fort to the number of nearly 400. When about three miles distant, they could see us on a hill, and they at once fled. We found their flag in the bushes, with the motto, "Enforce the laws." Some arms, ammunition and tents fell into our hands here. We reduced the fort to ashes.

That night Col. Titus was out with his desperadoes, engaged in his favorite pastime of stealing horses, and intending, as it is supposed, to attack Judge Wakefield's house, which, however, he found too strongly guarded. They stole three or four horses and went back to their fort, little dreaming how hard retribution was treading on their heels. In the morning his fort was surrounded, and the firing commenced. One of our best men, Capt. Shombre, was mortally wounded before our cannon arrived. That was soon brought up, and planted forty rods from the fort. It was loaded with balls run from the type metal of the Herald of Freedom press, which Col. Titus had destroyed last May. When the first shot was fired the Lawrence boys shouted, "The Herald of Freedom is issued again!" The cannon was fired six times. At the sixth fire they surrendered. One of their men was killed, and Col. Titus badly wounded. We took nineteen prisoners and a quantity of arms and ammunition. Some of the tents were identified as belonging to the Chicago company. I had the good fortune to receive the sword of Col. Titus, a very nice article which I mean to transmit to my children. The United States troops were within a mile of us, in camp, but they did not interfere. The fort was destroyed, and Titus and his gang were marched to Lawrence.

The following day (Sunday) Gov. Shannon and Major



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Sedgwick came to Lawrence, and held a consultation with the Committee of Safety. It was agreed that the five Free-State prisoners arrested by the troops should be released, and the property taken at the sacking of Lawrence returned, and that then our prisoners should be set free.

The men of Kansas have struck a noble blow. In the moment of victory they have shown great moderation. They are no longer to be trodden in the dust. Money contributed to help them will no longer benefit the Border-Ruffians. Kansas needs men and money. Kansas can never be made a slave State if the friends of freedom are true to their duty at this time. The men and women now here will sutler great privations, be stripped of everything, and many of them slain, unless immediate aid in men and money is furnished. They may be overborne, but they cannot be driven away. Could you have seen the spirit of the men, and of the women, too, as the last few days have called it forth, you would agree with me, that these pioneers for American freedom will stand firm to the last, be the odds against them what they may.

I have seen the State prisoners — most noble men are they. They are in prison because they are the best men in Kansas.

Yours, fraternally, for freedom and justice, R.B.F.



Aug. 30. Rain again in the night, as well as most of yesterday, raising the river a second time. They say there has not been such a year as this for more than half a century, — for winter cold, summer heat, and rain.

P.M. — To Vaccinium Oxycoccus Swamp.

Fair weather, clear and rather cool.

Pratt shows me at his shop a bottle filled with alcohol and camphor. The alcohol is clear and the camphor beautifully crystallized at the bottom for nearly an inch in depth, in the form of small feathers, like a boar frost. He has read that this is as good a barometer as any. It stands quite still, and has not been unstopped for a year; yet some days the alcohol will be quite clear, and even no camphor will be seen, and again it will be quite full of fine feathery particles, or it will be partly clear, as to-day.

Bidens connata abundant at Moore's Swamp, how long? The aspect of some of what I have called the swamp *Solidago stricta* there at present makes me doubt if it be not more than a variety, the leaves are so broad, smooth (*i.e.* uncurled or wrinkled), and thick, and some cauline ones so large, almost *speciosa*-like, to say nothing of size of rays.

The *Aster puniceus* is hardly yet in prime; its Great umbel-shaped tops not yet fully out. Its leaves are pretty generally whitened with mildew and unsightly. Even the chelone, where prostrate, has put forth roots from its stem, near the top.

The sarothra is now apparently in prime on the Great Fields, and comes near being open now, at 3 P.M. Bruised, it has the fragrance of sorrel and lemon, rather pungent or stinging, like a bee. *Hypericum corymbosum* lingers still, with *perforatum*.

I have come out this afternoon a-cranberrying, chiefly to gather some of the small cranberry, *Vaccinium Oxycoccus*, which Emerson says is the common cranberry of the north of Europe. This was a small object, yet not to be postponed, on account of imminent frosts, *i.e.*, if I would know this year the flavor of the European cranberry as compared with our larger kind. I thought I should like to have a dish of this sauce on the table at Thanksgiving of my own gathering. I could hardly make up my mind to come this way, it seemed so poor an object to spend the afternoon on. I kept foreseeing a lame conclusion, — how I should cross the Great Fields, look into Beck Stowe's, and then retrace my steps no richer than before. In fact, I expected little of this walk,



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yet it did pass through the side of my mind that somehow, on this very account (my small expectation), it would turn out well, as also the advantage of having some purpose, however small, to be accomplished — of letting your deliberate wisdom and foresight in the house to some extent direct and control your steps. If you would really, take a position outside the street and daily life of men, you must have deliberately planned your course, you must have business which is not your neighbors' business, which they cannot understand. For only absorbing employment prevails, succeeds, tallies all space, occupies territory, determines the future of individuals and states, drives [Kansas](#) out of your head, and actually and permanently occupies the only desirable and free Kansas against all border ruffians. The attitude of resistance is one of weakness, inasmuch as it only faces an enemy; it has its back to all that is truly attractive. You shall have your affairs, I will have mine. You will spend this afternoon in setting up your neighbor's stove, and be paid for it; I will spend it in gathering the few berries of the *Vaccinium Oxycoccus* which Nature produces here, before it is too late, and *be paid for it also* after another fashion. I have always reaped unexpected and incalculable advantages from carrying out at last, however tardily, any little enterprise which my genius suggested to me long ago as a thing to be done. some step to be taken, however slight, out of the usual course.

How many schools I have thought of which I might go to but did not go to! expecting foolishly that some greater advantage or schooling would come to me! It is these comparatively cheap and private expeditions that substantiate our existence and batten our lives, as, where a vine touches the earth in its undulating course, it puts forth roots and thickens its stock. Our employment generally is tinkering, mending the old worn-out teapot of society. Our stock in trade is solder. Better for me, says my genius, to go cranberrying this afternoon for the *Vaccinium Oxycoccus* in Gowing's Swamp, to get but a pocketful and learn its peculiar flavor, aye, and the flavor of Gowing's Swamp and of *life* in New England, than to go consul to Liverpool and get I don't know how many thousand dollars for it, with no such flavor. Many of our days should be spent, not in vain expectations and lying on our oars, but in carrying out deliberately and faithfully the hundred little purposes which every man's genius must have suggested to him. Let not your life be wholly without an object, though it be only to ascertain the flavor of a cranberry, for it will not be only the quality of an insignificant berry that you will have tasted, but the flavor of your life to that extent, and it will be such a sauce as no wealth can buy.

Both a conscious and an unconscious life are good. Neither is good exclusively, for both have the same source. The wisely conscious life springs out of an unconscious suggestion. I have found my account in travelling in having prepared beforehand a list of questions which I would get answered, not trusting to my interest at the moment, and can then travel with the most profit. Indeed, it is by obeying the suggestions of a higher light within you that you escape from yourself and, in the transit, as it were see with the unworn sides of your eye, travel totally new paths. What is that pretended life that does not take up a claim, that does not occupy ground, that cannot build a causeway to its objects, that sits on a bank looking over a bog, singing its desires?

However, it was not with such blasting expectations as these that I entered the swamp. I saw bags of cranberries, just gathered and tied up, on the banks of Beck Stow's Swamp. They must have been raked out of the water, now so high, before they should rot. I left my shoes and stockings on the bank far off and waded barelegged through rigid andromeda and other bushes a long way, to the soft open sphagnous centre of the swamp.

I found these cunning little cranberries lying high and dry on the firm uneven tops of the sphagnum, — their weak vine considerably on one side, — sparsely scattered about the drier edges of the swamp, or sometimes more thickly occupying some little valley a foot or two over, between two mountains of sphagnum. They were of two varieties, judging from the fruit. The one, apparently the ripest, colored most like the common cranberry but more scarlet, *i.e.* yellowish-green, blotched or checked with dark scarlet-red, commonly pear-shaped; the other, also pear-shaped, or more bulged out in the middle, thickly and finely dark-spotted, or peppered oil yellowish-green or straw-colored or pearly ground, — almost exactly like the smilacina and convallaria berries now, except that they are a little larger and not so spherical, — and with a tinge of purple. A singular difference. They both lay very snug in the moss, often the whole of the long (an inch and a half or more) peduncle buried, their vines very inobvious, projecting only one to three inches, so that it was not easy to tell what vine they belonged to, and you were obliged to open the moss carefully with your fingers to ascertain it, while the common large cranberry there, with its stiff erect vine, was commonly lifted above the sphagnum. The grayish speckled variety was particularly novel and pretty, though not easy to detect. It lay here and there snugly sunk in the sphagnum, whose drier parts it exactly resembled in color, just like some kind of swamp sparrows, eggs in their nest. I was obliged with my finger carefully to trace the slender pedicel through the moss to its vine, when I would pluck the whole together. Like jewels worn on, or set in, these sphagnous breasts of the swamp, — swamp pearls, call them. One or two to a vine and, on an average, three eighths of an inch in diameter. They are so remote from their vines, on their long thread-like peduncles, that they remind you the more forcibly of eggs, and in May I might mistake them for such. These plants are almost parasitic, resting wholly on the sphagnum, in water instead of air. The sphagnum is a living soil for it. It rests on and amid this, on an acre of



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sponges. They are evidently earlier than the common. A few are quite soft and red-purple.

I waded quite round the swamp for an hour, my bare feet in the cold water beneath, and it was a relief to place them on the warmer surface of the sphagnum. I filled one pocket with each variety, but sometimes, being confused, crossed hands and put them into the wrong pocket.

I enjoyed this cranberrying very much, notwithstanding the wet and cold, and the swamp seemed to be yielding its crop to me alone, for there are none else to pluck it or to value it. I told the proprietor once that they grew here, but he, learning that they were not abundant enough to be gathered for the market, has probably never thought of them since. I am the only person in the township who regards them or knows of them, and I do not regard them in the light of their pecuniary value. I have no doubt I felt richer wading there with my two pockets full, treading on wonders at every step, than any farmer going to market with a hundred bushels which he has raked, or hired to be raked. I got further and further away from the town every moment, and my good genius seemed [to] have smiled on me, leading me hither, and then the sun suddenly came out clear and bright, but it did not warm my feet. I would gladly share my gains, take one, or twenty, into partnership and get this swamp with them, but I do not know an individual whom this berry cheers and nourishes as it does me. When I exhibit it to them I perceive that they take but a momentary interest in it and commonly dismiss it from their thoughts with the consideration that it cannot be profitably cultivated. You could not get a pint at one haul of a rake, and Slocum would not give you much for them. But I love it the better partly for that reason even. I fill a basket with them and keep it several days by my side. If anybody else — any farmer, at least — should spend an hour thus wading about here in this secluded swamp, barelegged, intent on the sphagnum, filling his pocket only, with no rake in his hand and no bag or bushel on the bank, he would be pronounced insane and have a guardian put over him; but if he'll spend his tune skimming and watering his milk and selling his small potatoes for large ones, or generally in skinning flints, he will probably be made guardian of somebody else. I have not garnered any rye or oats, but I gathered the wild vine of the Assabet.

As I waded there I came across an ant-like heap, and, breaking it open with my hand, found it to my surprise to be an ant-hill in the sphagnum, full of ants with their young or ova. It consisted of particles of sphagnum like sawdust, was a foot and a half in diameter, and my feet sunk to water all around it! The ants were small and of a uniform pale sorrel-color.

I noticed also a few small peculiar-looking huckleberries hanging on bushes amid the sphagnum, and, tasting, perceived that they were hispid, a new kind to me. *Gaylussacia dumosa* var. *hirtella* (perhaps just after *resinosa*), though Gray refers it to a “sandy low soil” and says nothing of the hispid fruit. It grows from one to two feet high, the leaves minutely resinous-dotted — are not others? — and mucronate, the racemes long, with leaf-like bracts now turned conspicuously red. Has a small black hairy or hispid berry, shining; but insipid and inedible, with a tough, hairy skin left in the mouth; has very prominent calyx-lobes.

I seemed to have reached a new world, so wild a place that the very huckleberries grew hairy and were inedible. I feel as if I were in Rupert's Land, and a slight cool but agreeable shudder comes over me, as if equally far away from human society. What's the need of visiting far-off mountains and bogs, if a half hour's walk will carry me into such wildness and novelty? But why should not as wild plants grow here as in Berkshire, as in Labrador? Is Nature so easily tamed? Is she not as primitive and vigorous here as anywhere? How does this particular acre of secluded, unfrequented, useless (?) quaking bog differ from an acre in Labrador? Has any white man ever settled on it? Does any now frequent it? Not even the Indian comes here now. I see that there are some square rods within twenty miles of Boston just as wild and primitive and unfrequented as a square rod in Labrador, as unaltered by man. Here grows the hairy huckleberry as it did in Squaw Sachem's day and a thousand years before, and concerns me perchance more than it did her. I have no doubt that for a moment I experience exactly the same sensations as if I were alone in a bog in Rupert's land, and it saves me the trouble of going there; for what in any case makes the difference between being here and being there but many such little differences of flavor and roughness put together? Rupert's Land is recognized as much by one sense as another. I felt a shock, a thrill, an agreeable surprise in one instant, for, no doubt, all the possible inferences were at once drawn, with a rush, in my mind, — I could be in Rupert's Land and supping at home within the hour! This beat the railroad. I recovered from my surprise without danger to my sanity, and permanently annexed Rupert's Land. That wild hairy huckleberry, inedible as it was, was equal to a domain secured to me and reaching to the South Sea. That was an unexpected harvest. I hope you have gathered as much, neighbor, from your corn and potato fields. I have got in my huckleberries. I shall be ready for Thanksgiving. It is in vain to dreams of a wildness distant from ourselves. There is none such. It is the bog in our brain and bowels, the primitive vigor of Nature in us, that inspires that dream. I shall never find in the wilds of Labrador any greater wildness than in some recess in Concord, *i.e.* than I import into it. A little more manhood or virtue will make the surface of the globe anywhere thrillingly novel and wild. That alone will provide and pay the fiddler; it will convert the district road into an untrodden cranberry bog, for it restores all things to their original primitive




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JENNY LIND

flourishing and promising state.

A cold white horizon sky in the north, forerunner of the fall of the year. I go to bed and dream of cranberry-pickers far in the cold north. With windows partly closed, with continent concentrated thoughts, I dream. I get my new experiences still, not at the opera listening to the Swedish Nightingale, but at Beck Stow's Swamp listening to the native wood thrush [Wood Thrush  *Catharus mustelina*].

Wading in the cold swamp braces me. I was invigorated, though I tasted not a berry. The frost will soon come and smite them on the surface of the sphagnum.

Consider how remote and novel that swamp. Beneath it is a quaking bed of sphagnum, and in it grow *Andromeda Polifolia*, *Kalmia glauca*, menyanthes (or buck-bean), *Gaylussacia dumosa*, *Vaccinium Oxycoccus*, — plants which scarcely a citizen of Concord ever sees. It would be as novel to them to stand there as in a conservatory, or in Greenland.

Better it is to go a-cranberrying than to go a-huckleberrying. For that is cold and bracing, leading your thoughts beyond the earth, and you do not surfeit on crude or terrene berries. It feeds your spirit, now in the season of white twilights, when frosts are apprehended, when edible berries are mostly gone.

Those small gray sparrow-egg cranberries lay so prettily in the recesses of the sphagnum, I could wade for hours in the cold water gazing at them, with a swarm of mosquitoes hovering about my bare legs, — but at each step the friendly sphagnum in which I sank protected my legs like a buckler, — not a crevice by which my foes could enter.

I see that all is not garden and cultivated field and crops, that there are square rods in Middlesex County as purely primitive and wild as they were a thousand years ago, which have escaped the plow and the axe and the scythe and the cranberry-rake, little oases of wildness in the desert of our civilization, wild as a square rod on the moon, supposing it to be uninhabited. I believe almost in the personality of such planetary matter, feel something akin to reverence for it, can even worship it as terrene, titanic matter extant in my day. We are so different we admire each other, we healthily attract one another. I love it as a maiden. These spots are meteoric, acrolitic, and such matter has in all ages been worshipped. Aye, when we are lifted out of the slime and film of our habitual life, we see the whole globe to be an aerolite, and reverence it as such, and make pilgrimages to it, far off as it is. How happens it that we reverence the stones which fall from another planet, and not the stones which belong to this, — another globe, not this, — heaven, and not earth? Are not the stones in Hodge's wall as good as the aerolite at Mecca? Is not our broad back-door-stone as good as any corner-stone in heaven?

It would imply the regeneration of mankind, if they were to become elevated enough to truly worship sticks and stones. It is the sentiment of fear and slavery and habit which makes a heathenish idolatry. Such idolaters abound in all countries, and heathen cross the seas to reform heathen, dead to bury the dead, and all go down to the pit together. If I could, I would worship the parings of my nails. If he who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before is a benefactor, he who discovers two gods where there was only known the one (and such a one!) before is a still greater benefactor. I would fain improve every opportunity to wonder and worship, as a sunflower welcomes the light. The more thrilling, wonderful, divine objects I behold in a day, the more expanded and immortal I become. If a stone appeals to me and elevates me, tells me how many miles I have come, how many remain to travel, — and to the more, the better, — reveals the future to me in some measure,

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it is a matter of private rejoicing. If it did the same service to all, it might well be a matter of public rejoicing.



FALL OF STONES
THE BLACK STONE OF MECCA



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September: [Watson Brown](#) got married with Isabella M. Thompson.



(His son by this marriage would live only to his 5th year but would nevertheless survive both his father and his grandfather, because when sent out of the engine house at [Harpers Ferry](#) by [John Brown](#) to negotiate, Watson would be gunned down by the white citizens. He would drag himself back into shelter and live on, groaning, his head cradled in [Edwin Coppoc](#)'s lap, for a considerable period. He would expire on October 18, 1859. His widow would remarry with his brother [Salmon Brown](#).)

Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science and Art included an anonymous essay, purportedly by a woman but actually by the [Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) of Worcester, about "Going to Mt. Katahdin." Several of [Henry Thoreau](#)'s acquaintances were alluded to in the article. Higginson anonymously distributed copies of the magazine to the various persons who had been on the 1855 expedition to Ktaadn, suggesting that they guess the author. Theophilus Brown, who had been on the jaunt, would loan his copy of this magazine issue to [Henry Thoreau](#), for train reading, and Thoreau would mention it in his letter to H.G.O. Blake on December 6, 1856.



Thousands of settlers were pouring into [Kansas](#) from the North and from the South, armed for a conflict there over slavery. This Daguerreotype would be presented to the Kansas State Historical Society in March 1878 by [Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#), leader of the 1st South Carolina Volunteer regiment of black Union soldiers. Higginson's inscription: "Daguerreotype of one of the first [Free-State](#) batteries in Kansas. Presented to T.W. Higginson by one of the officers, at Topeka, Kansas, in September, 1856."



The "Battle of Osawatomie," according to William G. Cutler's HISTORY OF THE STATE OF KANSAS:



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The troops were guided by the Reverend Martin White, who was one of the most bitter Pro-slavery partisans in the Territory, and had himself fled from the country about the time of the Pottawatomic murders, and claimed to have been driven out. He was with the advance scouting party, which, as it approached the town, came upon David Garrison and [Frederick Brown](#), a son of old [John Brown](#). Both were, without warning or provocation, shot dead. White boasted afterward that it had been he who gave Frederick his quietus, asserting in justification of the act, that Frederick, when shot, was known to him as one of the pestiferous gang of Abolitionists, and was riding at the time a horse stolen from him; and that, this being a time of war, it had been no murder.

The village was reached shortly after this double murder, by the whole force. They were there confronted by a party of about forty Free-State men, under command of that grim, mysterious, unrelenting old hero, John Brown. The town was hotly defended by the little party for a time, but at length, overpowered by numbers, they were forced to retreat and leave it to pillage and destruction. After the sacking of the store and dwellings of all valuables that could be transported, the soldiers set fire to the town and destroyed it. When the conflagration ceased, but four buildings remained among the smouldering [*sic*] ruins of what had been the thriving village of [Osawatomic](#).²⁹



The following was Capt. Reid's report of the affair:

CAMP BELL CREEK, August 31.

Gentlemen -

I moved with 250 men on the Abolition fort and town of Osawatomic - the head-quarters of Old Brown - on night before last; marched forty miles and attacked the town without dismounting the men, about sunrise yesterday. We had five men wounded, none dangerously - Capt. Boyce, William Gordon, and three others. We killed about thirty of them, among the number, certain, a son of old Brown, and almost certain Brown himself; destroyed all their ammunition and provisions, and the boys would burn the town. I could not help it.



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We must be supported by our friends. We will want more men and ammunition – ammunition of all sorts. Powder, muskets, ball and caps is the constant cry.

I write in great haste, as I have been in the saddle, road 100 miles, and fought a battle without rest.

Your friend,

REID

Old John Brown, in his modest account of the battle, states that his force consisted-of ‘some twelve or fifteen recruits,’ which he brought into the town in the morning, together with ten or fifteen mounted men, under Capt. Cline, whom he met just before the battle began, and who joined forces with him in the defense. The whole defensive force did not number over thirty men. Capt. Cline’s men got out of ammunition, and were forced to retire across the river. The remaining force kept up the fire until but six or seven remained. Capt. Brown summed up the losses as follows:

We had one man felled – a Mr. Powers, from Capt. Cline’s company – in the fight. One of my men – a Mr. Partridge – was shot in crossing the river. Two or three of the party, who took part in the fight, are yet missing, and may be lost or taken prisoners. Two were wounded, viz., Dr. Updegralf and a Mr. Collis.

* * *

The loss of the enemy, as we learn by the different statements of our own, as well as their people, was some thirty-one or two killed, and from forty to fifty wounded. After burning the town to ashes, and killing a Mr. Williams they had taken, whom neither party claimed, they took a hasty leave, carrying their dead and wounded with them. They did not attempt to cross the river, nor to search for us, and have not since returned to look over their work. I give this in great haste, in the midst of constant interruptions. My second son was with me in the fight and escaped unharmed. This I mention for the benefit of his friends.

Old preacher White, I hear, boast of having killed my son. Of course he is a liar.

JOHN BROWN,

LAWRENCE, KAN., September 7, 1856.

Reid, with his command, having destroyed the village, returned with his plunder to the encampment on Bull Creek. News reached [Lawrence](#) and Topeka of the burning of Osawatomie on Saturday evening, and a force of nearly 300 men was rallied, and on the following morning set out in pursuit of the enemy. Col. Lane, still known as Joe Cook, controlled by his advice the movements of the force, although having no open command. The march was during one of the hottest of Kansas’ hottest days. The boys had made no preparations for sustenance during the hastily planned campaign. In spite of terrible suffering from hunger, thirst and heat, they made the forced march (the Topeka Company, over forty miles), and appeared in sight of the enemy, still encamped at Bull Creek, before sunset on the evening of the 31st. The cavalry came in sight of the camp while the infantry were some miles in the rear. While waiting for them to come up, they, in reconnoitering, exchanged a few shots with the pickets of the enemy. The boys, in spite of fatigue, were ready and eager to fight it out without rest. Before the infantry had come up sufficiently near to co-operate with the cavalry in an attack on the enemy, Col. Lane (Cook) advised a halt and subsequently had them retire some miles and go into camp, or rather take what rest they could in the open air, with the intention, as was supposed, of attacking the enemy on the following morning. During the night the enemy broke camp and retreated to the Missouri border, and on the following day the footsore and hungry company, disappointed of a fight, and in no amiable mood, commenced the return march, slowly and with laggard steps, until met by rumors of fresh danger and renewed outrages at home.



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On its becoming known at Leecompton that a force had set out to meet the invaders, or intercept them in their retreat to Missouri, it was determined by Woodson and his advisers to make a diversion in favor of their friends, by subjecting the Free-State settlers to fresh outrages in the absence of the Free-State forces who had held them thus far under restraint. Col. P. St. George Cooke was ordered by Woodson "to proceed at the earliest moment to invest Topeka, disarm the insurrectionists, or aggressive invaders against the organized government of the Territory, to be found at or near that point, leveling to the ground their breastworks, forts and fortifications, keep the head men or leaders in close confinement, and all persons found in arms against the Government as prisoners, subject to the orders of the Marshal." He was also informed that it was very desirable to intercept the invaders on the road known as "Lane's Trail,"³⁰ leading from Nebraska to Topeka. In the opinion of Col. Cook, Woodson had transcended his instructions in the orders he had given. He did not believe it a part of his military duty to take the field for the purposes indicated in the Governor's letter, nor to further his well-known design to bring on a collision between the Free-State forces and the Government troops; nor did he propose to do the totally illegal and disgraceful work of making indiscriminate and wholesale arrests of a class of persons not individually charged with crime, and holding them subject to charges not yet preferred, and to writs not yet in existence. He was too much of a man and too high-minded a soldier to thus prostitute his high calling. He declined to obey such orders, except they came to him direct from the War Department.

At the same time, Marshal Donaldson and his Deputies, Newsem and Cramer, armed with writs for the arrest of the leading Free-State men, and accompanied by bands of the Territorial militia, were scouring the country with

30. The route designated as "Lane's Trail," had been traveled by him as well as by his first party who had reached Topeka on August 13, The trail was not laid out by him but by the "conductors" of the train, To them, in a greater measure than to any others, is due the credit of establishing and locating the northern road over the route Lane's men were forced to take when turned back on the Missouri River, The following, published two days after the arrival of the first party in Topeka, explains itself:

A CARD.

TOPEKA, KANSAS, August 15, 1856.

We, the undersigned, conductors of a company of emigrants, into Kansas, would hereby inform the public that we have succeeded in achieving a safe and peaceful passage through Iowa and Nebraska, and on a new road which we and our company have opened, have arrived and are now encamped in Topeka, the seat of Government of Kansas.

Along the road we have established colonies and towns for greater convenience to emigration, viz.,: Plymouth, situated three miles from the line between Kansas and Nebraska, which will be important to immigrants in crossing the frontier, as a post for supplies; Lexington, about twelve miles from Plymouth, and at a convenient distance therefrom for protective purposes and the remission of supplies for immigrants; and Holton, on Elk Creek, three miles from Skinnersville. The roads between Nebraska City and Topeka are generally excellent, and where not so, a small expense now in process of incurrence, will render them safe and easy; and we would hereby invite all emigrants to Kansas to adopt it in the transmission hither of their families and effects.

M. C. DICKEY,

CALVIN CUTTER, } Conductors of emigrants train



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the ostensible purpose of securing their arrest. Some prisoners were taken, but in most cases the persons sought were not found at their homes, whereupon the deserted houses were burned. The business of arson and pillage was thus carried on through Sunday and Monday in all the country within retreating distance of Lecompton, until the return of the men of the Bull Creek expedition made it unsafe to continue field operations. Seven houses were burned, among them those of Judge Wakefield and Capt. Sam Walker, large quantities of provisions seized, and several arrests made. With the booty and prisoners, the raiders had sought covert at Lecompton when the companies arrived at [Lawrence](#). It was immediately decided to make an armed demonstration on Lecompton, and demand the liberation of the prisoners, among whom were Hutchinson and Sutherland, of [Lawrence](#), who were held as spies, as has been before recounted.

The forces were to march in two divisions. One, under Col. Harvey, was to proceed up the north bank of the Kansas River to a point north of the town; the other, under the direction of Gen. Lane,³¹ to march on the south bank and occupy the heights which overlooked the village. On the afternoon of September 4, Col. Harvey with 150 men moved up the north bank, and in the evening arrived at the place appointed, which cut off completely all chances of escape from Lecompton across the river. Lane's forces did not, as had been planned, appear on his arrival. He remained in wait all through the cold and rainy night which followed when, hearing nothing from the other division, he concluded that for some reason to him unknown, the attack had been given up, and accordingly himself abandoned the post where he had waited through the stormy night, and returned with his command, to [Lawrence](#), where he arrived in the evening to learn that Lane's division had, after unexpected delay, marched as agreed, and were then at Lecompton.

The expedition of Harvey, though unsatisfactory to both him and his command, was not barren of good results. Their presence the night before on the opposite side of the river, where they could successfully cut off retreat from the town in case of an attack, became known soon after their arrival, and threw the Territorial militia encamped there into panic and confusion. Moreover disagreements had arisen among the leaders themselves, a part rebelling against the work of burning and pillaging which Woodson had assigned them to do. A respectable minority absolutely refused to further pursue that mode of warfare. On the appearance of Harvey's troops, and in anticipation of the coming of another force from the other side, several officers having already left the camp and returned home in disgust, Gen. Richardson, having no confidence in his disordered and inharmonious command, decided to resign, which he did on the morning of the 5th. During the day, Woodson dismissed the forces, as of no further use to him either for offensive or defensive purposes, and also arranged to return the prisoners to [Lawrence](#). All this was unknown to Lane's force, then on its way from [Lawrence](#), and had been brought about by the appearance of Harvey's troops and the dissensions within.

About 4 o'clock P. M., the force from [Lawrence](#) took possession of the hill overlooking the town and commanding the foundations of the capitol then in process of construction, which had been utilized by the Territorial troops as a fortress. The disbanded militia made no sign of defense, but messengers were sent by Gov. Woodson in great haste, to the camp of Col. Cooke, calling on him to protect the town against the threatening enemy, who were reported "one thousand strong," and about to bombard and destroy the town.

Mr. Branscomb and Capt. Cline were sent into the town under a flag of truce, and on demanding of Gen. Marshall, the only officer who would acknowledge that he had any command, the unconditional surrender of the Free-State prisoners, were, after a short parley, informed that all the prisoners demanded had been released that morning, that provisions had been made for their escort to [Lawrence](#) on the following day by a company of dragoons, concluding by making a counter demand on Gen. Lane for all prisoners in hands of the Free-State men. The messengers returned to the Free-State camp, which they reached just as Col. Cooke arrived. He (Cooke), addressing Lane and other officers, said: Gentlemen, you have [sic] made a great mistake in coming here to-day. The Territorial militia was dismissed this morning; some of them have left, some are leaving now, and the rest

31. Authorities differ as to the exact time when Gen. Lane threw off all disguise and ceased to be known as Capt. Cook. If not at this time, certainly two days later, Joe Cook, alias James H. Lane, Disappears from the war annals of Kansas.



RACE WAR,

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will leave and go to their homes as soon as they can.” Hon. Marcus J. Parrott, who had been driven from Leavenworth, had come to [Lawrence](#) for safety, and was with the party of besiegers, replied: “Col. Cooke, when we send a man, or two men, or a dozen men, to speak with the Territorial authorities, they are arrested and held like felons. How, then, are we to know what is going on in Lecompton? Why, we have to come here with an army to find out what is going on. How else could we know?” To this Col. Cooke made no reply. The prisoners³² came over to the camp of their friends, and returned with them to [Lawrence](#) the following day. There was on Saturday a slight lull in the excitement at [Lawrence](#), and a feeling of satisfaction pervaded the town in contemplation of a good week’s work done. During the day, Gen. Richardson passed through [Lawrence](#), when he was courteously received by Gen. Lane, who escorted him a short distance on his way to Franklin. Richardson professed to be on his way to Missouri to disband the border forces.

There were at this time many refugees from Leavenworth and vicinity in the city, who had fled from the fresh outburst of murder and rapine which had as usual burst upon the heads of the Free-State settlers of that part of the Territory, in retaliation for the victories of their better organized brothers south of the Kaw.

Marcus J. Parrott, H. Miles Moore, F. G. Adams, and scores besides, had come to [Lawrence](#), no less for personal safety than to raise a force sufficiently strong to turn the tide against their relentless foes, and to reinstate them in their homes, from which they had fled for their lives, many of them leaving defenseless families behind. A momentary peace having been conquered south of the Kaw, they appealed to the boys still in arms, to march at once upon Leavenworth. They detailed, as only living witnesses could, the horrors from which they had fled -- the murders on the road, the shooting of Phillips in his own house, the driving of defenseless women and children, by scores and hundreds, like sheep aboard the steamers, and out of Leavenworth City, by Emery and his Missouri gang, the expulsion from the county of every man who was suspected of “Abolitionism,” the defenseless condition of the women and children, who, unable to flee, remained subject to all the outrages which their defenseless condition might invite -- all these were told in a way to make the appeal irresistible.

On Sunday a council of war was held, at which Lane, Harvey and all the other officers, and many of the soldiers, discussed the situation, and it was then decided to “carry the way into Africa,” or what was the same thing, to cross the river and disperse the bands then prowling through Jefferson and Leavenworth Counties, and march on Leavenworth City. While the consultation was going on, old John Brown, who had not been seen or heard from since the morning when he retreated into the woods after his defense of Osawatomie, rode into [Lawrence](#).

His arrival was hailed with shouts by the knot of soldiers and others that gathered around him.³³ A majority of the boys chose Brown as their commander in the proposed march on Leavenworth. He declined the proffered honor, on the ground that to supersede Col. Harvey, who was, under the existing military organization, entitled to the position, would be in ill taste, and might lead to dissatisfaction. So the plans for the campaign were perfected with Capt. Brown left out.

During the following week, under the command of Col. Harvey, with Capts. Hull, of Jefferson County, and Wright, of Leavenworth County, offensive Free-State operations north of the Kansas were begun. The first encounter was at Slough Creek, near the site of the present town of Oskaloosa, Jefferson County, on September 11. It was a complete surprise to the enemy there encamped, and resulted in the capture of nearly the entire force, arms, equipments and baggage.³⁴ Two days before this occurrence, not known at that time to Harvey and his men, Gov. Geary had arrived at Fort Leavenworth, and Woodson’s administration was at an end. A message from Lane was received by Harvey after the Slough Creek affair was over, which, as recalled by a reliable witness³⁵ present

32. The prisoners here alluded to were those who had been taken for participation in the Franklin affair, and such others as had been, under various pretexts, taken by Woodson’s militia and the Marshals, and should not be confounded with the Free-State prisoners -- Robinson, Jenkins and others -- who were all this time in the custody of the United States troops near Lecompton, waiting their trial for high treason.

33. The account of Brown’s appearance in Lawrence at that date was obtained from Hon. F.G. Adams, Secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, who at that time was in the city, a refugee from Leavenworth, and witnessed his arrival.

34. See history of Jefferson County.

35. F.G. Adams.



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when it came, was essentially as follows: "Geary has come in -- I advise you to return." He returned accordingly, reaching [Lawrence](#) at noon of the 12th.

The close of Woodson's short rule left the whole Territory in a state of absolute anarchy. There was not a place outside [Lawrence](#), Topeka, and the region roundabout, where life or property was safe, and even there, where the Free-State men had forced Woodson to terms, it is the truth of history to state that the Pro-Slavery settlers were subject nightly to unfriendly visits from irresponsible parties of Free-State guerrillas, who rendered their tenure to personal property, especially horses and store supplies, quite uncertain, and their lives a horrid, nightmare of fearful anticipations. North of the river, forces on both sides were in a state of open war in Jefferson County, while further to the east, in Leavenworth, there was no law except that of indiscriminate murder, robbery, or proscription of all Free-State residents. Beyond the border, was encamped the army of Atchison, which had retreated from Bull Creek, receiving re-enforcements from all the Western Missouri counties, preparatory to a fresh and more formidable invasion of the Territory. Thus, in the few days of his rule, did Woodson so manage affairs as, by comparison, to throw a tinge of decency and respectability over the administration of his predecessor, that had otherwise been wanting.



LIBERATION OF FREE-STATE PRISONERS.

The last notable occurrence before the arrival of Gov. Geary was the examination and release on bail of Gov. Robinson and his companions, who had been held on indictment for treason for the past four months. The counsel for the government was C. H. Grover; for the prisoners, Charles H. Branscomb and Marcus J. Parrott. The day set down for trial was September 8, but on that day neither judge, jury, clerk nor marshal appeared, although the prisoners were ready for trial. On the next day they appeared, and the prisoners were arraigned. Strenuous efforts were made by the counsel for the prisoners for an immediate trial, which were opposed by motions and arguments for postponement on the part of the prosecuting counsel, based first upon the grounds that, owing to the Territory's being in insurrection, a jury could not be obtained, and that important witnesses were absent. The arguments, pro and con, lasted during the day, and resulted in a denial of all motions for postponement, and on the morning of the 10th Charles Robinson was arraigned for trial, separately, on the charge of usurpation of office. Judge Lecompte, at this stage of the proceedings, decided to continue the case, not on any grounds before urged by Mr. Grover, but upon the ground that "the great excitement prevailing in the country was such as to prevent a fair trial of the prisoners." The prisoner was thereupon admitted to bail in the sum of \$500. He was again arraigned with the other prisoners for treason, the case being "United States against Charles Robinson and others." The prisoners under this indictment were admitted to bail in the sum of \$5,000 each, and the cases continued. John Brown, Jr., and H. H. Williams, who had been held prisoners for some months, though not under indictment, were released on bail of \$1,000 each.

Judge Lecompte, apparently anxious to get the prisoners off his hands and out of confinement before the arrival of Gov. Geary, accepted the bail offered without hesitancy, and the last of the political prisoners were thus released September 10. They left the tents where they had been held in confinement for four months, and in company with friends and under military escort departed for [Lawrence](#) that afternoon. They were met and welcomed one mile out of town by the "Lawrence Stubbs," Gen. Lane and staff, and many of their friends, and escorted to Massachusetts street, where crowds of their fellow-townsmen were assembled to greet them. Speeches of congratulation on the happy issue were made by Gov. Robinson and others. The rejoicing was continued in the evening, increased by the arrival of Mr. Nute and other citizens, who had been captured by the Leavenworth brigands under Emery's men, and who had been released the day previous. The treason cases were subsequently nolle prossed. Gov. Robinson was tried on the charge of usurpation of office, before Judge Cato, in August, 1857. The Judge charged strongly against the prisoner, but the jury, believing, as ably argued by his counsel, that there could be no usurpation of an office which did not exist, gave a verdict of acquittal August 20, and the farce thus ended.



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September 9, Tuesday: [John White Geary](#) arrived at Fort Leavenworth as the new governor of the [Kansas Territory](#) (he would continue to his capital, Leecompton, on the following day).

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

[William H. Leeman](#) had been recruited in Maine because he was very impressed with [John Brown](#), and had ventured to [Kansas](#) with the 2d Massachusetts colony. At this point he enlisted in Captain Brown's "Volunteer Regulars." He had fought well at [Osawatomic](#) while still but 17 years old. [Owen Brown](#) would find him hard to control at [Springdale, Iowa](#). [George B. Gill](#) would say of him that he had "a good intellect with great ingenuity." By the raid upon [Harpers Ferry](#) he would have reached the age of 20. On October 17, 1859, the youngest of the raiders, he would make a mad dash out of the relative safety of the armory to swim down the Potomac River but two militiamen would catch up with him and shoot him down on an islet in the river. His body would be used for target practice for hours by the drunken citizenry, until the hail of bullets would push it into the current and it would be carried downstream. Mrs. Annie Brown Adams would write of him: "He was only a boy. He smoked a good deal and drank sometimes; but perhaps people would not think that so very wicked now. He was very handsome and very attractive."



On this morning [Henry Thoreau](#) boarded the train heading north from Brattleboro, Vermont. The wife of the Reverend Addison Brown, Ann E. Wetherbee Brown, would remember Thoreau's visit to her home for the



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remainder of her 99 years.



Sept. 9. Tuesday. 8 A.M. — Ascend the Chesterfield Mountain with Miss Frances and Miss Mary Brown.

The Connecticut is about twenty rods wide between Brattleboro and Hinsdale. This mountain, according to Frost, 1064 feet high. It is the most remarkable feature here. The village of Brattleboro is peculiar for the nearness of the primitive wood and the mountain. Within three rods of Brown's house was excellent botanical ground on the side of a primitive wooded hillside, and still better along the Coldwater Path. But, above all, this everlasting mountain is forever lowering over the village, shortening the day and wearing a misty cap each morning. You look up to its top at a steep angle from the village streets. A great part belongs to the Insane Asylum. This town will be convicted of folly if they ever permit this mountain to be laid bare. Francis [*sic*] B. says its Indian name is Wantastiquet, from the name of West River above. Very abundant about B. the *Gerardia tenuifolia*, in prime, which I at first mistook for the *purpurea*. The latter I did not see. High up the mountain the *Aster macrophyllus* as well as *corymbosus*. The (apparently) *Platanthra orbiculata* (?) leaves, round and flat on ground (*vide* press): another by it with larger and more oblong leaves. Pine-sap. A tuft of five-divided leaves, fifteen or eighteen inches high, slightly fern-like (*vide* press). *Galium circazans* var. *lanceolatum*. Top of the mountain covered with wood. Saw Ascutney, between forty and fifty miles up the river, but not Monadnock on account of woods.

P.M. — To and up a brook north of Brown's house. A large alternate cornel, four or five inches in diameter, a dark-gray stem. The kidney-shaped leaves of the *Asarum Canadense* common there. *Panax quinquefolium*, with peculiar flat scarlet fruit in a little umbel. *Clinopodium vulgare*, or basil, apparently flatted down by a freshet, rather past prime; and spearmint in brook just above. Close behind Brown's, *Liparis liliifolia*, or tway-blade, leaves and bulb.

A very interesting sight from the top of the mountain was that of the cars so nearly under you, apparently creeping along, you could see so much of their course.

The epigaea was very abundant on the hill behind Brown's and elsewhere in B. The *Populus monilifera* grows on West River, but I did not see it. The *Erigeron Philadelphicus* I saw pressed, with innumerable fine rays. Scouring-rush was common along the Coldwater Path and elsewhere.

The most interesting sight I saw in Brattleboro was the skin and skull of a panther (*Felis concolor*) (cougar, catamount, painter, American lion, puma), which was killed, according to a written notice attached, on the 15th of June by the Saranac Club of Brattleboro, six young men, on a fishing and hunting excursion.³⁶ This paper described it as eight feet in extreme length and weighing one hundred and ten pounds. The Brattleboro newspaper says its body was "4 feet 11 inches in length, and the tail 2 feet 9 inches: the animal weighed 108 pounds." I was surprised at its great size and apparent strength. It gave one a new idea of our American forests and the vigor of nature here. It was evident that it could level a platoon of men with a stroke of its paw. I was particularly impressed by the size of its limbs, the size of its canine teeth, and its great white claws. I do not see but this affords a sufficient foundation for the stories of the lion heard and its skins seen near Boston by the first settlers. This creature was very catlike, though the tail was not tapering, but as large at the extremity as anywhere, yet not tufted like the lion's. It had a long neck, a long thin body, like a lean cat. Its fore feet were about six inches long by four or five wide, as set up.

I talked with the man who shot him, a Mr. Kellogg, a lawyer. They were fishing on one of the Saranac Lakes, their guide being the Harvey Moody whom Hammond describes, when they heard the noise of some creature threshing about amid the bushes on the hillside. The guide suspected that it was a panther which had caught a deer. He reconnoitred and found that it was a panther which had got one fore paw (the left) in one of his great double-spring, long teethed or hooked bear-traps. He had several of these traps set (without bait) in the neighborhood. It fell to Kellogg's lot to advance with the guide and shoot him. They approached within six or seven rods, saw that the panther was held firmly, and fired just as he raised his head to look at them. The ball entered just above his nose, pierced his brain, and killed him at once. The guide got the bounty of twenty-five dollars, but the game fell to his employers. A slice had been sliced off one side of each ear to secure this with. It was a male. The guide thought it an old one, but Kellogg said that, as they were returning with it, the

CAT

36. The fishing excursion to Saranac Lake had been made up of George Bradley Kellogg, Francis Goodhue, Sidney A. Miller, Linus P. Dickinson, Charles Goodhue, and Nathaniel Hayward. Bela N. Chamberlain of Pond & Chamberlain Co. had prepared the carcass of the panther "to be kept in their Hat Store in this village as a memento of the doings of the Saranac Lake Club."



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inhabitants regarded it as common; they only kicked it aside in the road, remarking that [it] was a large one.

I talked also with the Mr. Chamberlin who set it up. He showed me how sharp the edges of the broad grinders were just behind the canine teeth. They were zigzag, thus: [DRAWING] and shut over the under, scraping close like shears and, as he proved, would cut off a straw clean. This animal looked very thin as set up, and probably in some states of his body would have weighed much more. Kellogg said that, freshly killed, the body *showed the nerves* much more than as set up. The color, etc., agreed very well with the account in Thompson's History of Vermont, except that there was, now at least, no yellow about the mouth or chin, but whitish. It was, in the main, the universal color of this family, or a little browner. According to Thompson, it is brown-red on the back, reddish-gray on the sides, whitish or light-ash on the belly; tail like the back above, except its extremity, which is brownish-black, not tufted; chin, upper lip, and inside of ears, yellowish-white. Hairs on back, short, brownish tipped with red; on the belly, longer, lighter, tipped with white; hairs of face like back with whitish hairs intermingled. Canines conical, claws pearly-white. Length, nose to tail, four feet eight inches; tail, two feet six inches; top of head to point of nose, ten inches; width across forehead, eight inches. Length of fore legs, one foot two inches; hind, one foot four inches. Weight usually about one hundred pounds. The largest he ever knew was seven feet in extreme length and weighed one hundred and eighteen pounds. One had been known to leap up a precipice fifteen feet high with a calf in his mouth. *Vide* Lawson, Hunter, and Jefferson in Book of Facts. Hunter when near the Rocky Mountains says, "So much were they to be apprehended... that no one ever ventured to go out alone, even on the most trifling occasion." He makes two kinds.

Emmons makes the extreme length of one of the largest cougars nine feet four inches, and the greatest length of the canine tooth of the upper jaw from the gum nine tenths of an inch. I think that the teeth of the one I saw were much larger. Says it is cowardly and "rarely if ever attacks man;" that a hunter met five in St. Lawrence County, N.Y., and, with his dog and gun only, killed three that day and the other two the next. Yet he will follow a man's track a great distance. Scream at evening heard for miles. Thinks about 45° its northern range.

EMMONS

RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

September 12, Friday: This drawing was based on a Daguerreotype of Captain [John Brown](#) made on this day in [Lawrence, Kansas](#):



THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

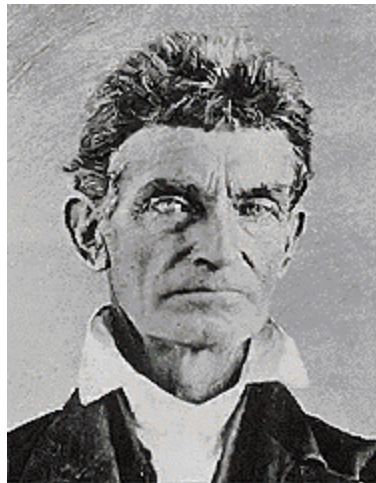


RACE WAR,

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October: The law offices of [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) moved to Brattle and Court Streets, Boston.

There was an Underground Railroad line, the “stations” of which were Salem in southeastern Iowa, Tabor, Lewis, Des Moines, Grinnel, Iowa City, West Liberty, [Springdale](#), Tipton, Dewitt, and Clinton. During this month Captain [John Brown](#) was in Iowa City meeting with William Penn Clarke, Dr. Jesse Bowen, Colonel Samuel C. Trowbridge (Iowa City’s first sheriff), and other abolitionists of the Kansas National Committee for Iowa. In the company of one of his sons, riding a mule and leading a horse, he visited [Springdale](#), the [Quaker](#) community east of Iowa City.



THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

[Oliver Brown](#) returned from the [Kansas Territory](#) to [North Elba](#), New York, where in 1858 he would marry with Martha E. Brewster ([Martha Brewster Brown](#)).





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December: [Herman Melville](#) toured Constantinople and [Egypt](#).

Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science and Art expressed the unsettled striving in which American life consisted:

The word is, "Go ahead; be something; make a pile, and make your mark."

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

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[John Brown](#) rode up to James Townsend's tavern "Traveler's Rest" in [Springdale](#), Iowa (which was the only one in that town), and as he dismounted, asked whether he had ever heard of "John Brown, of Kansas."

Amos Lawrence's son Amos Adams Lawrence offered to help found a University of Kansas atop Mount Oread in Lawrence, with a donation of at least \$10,000, that would amount to approximately 10% of the estimated total cost.



(He would attempt to persuade [John Carter Brown](#) of [Providence](#), [Rhode Island](#) to cough up enough to create in Kansas another [Brown University](#), but in this he would fail because, actually, all John Carter Brown cared about was collecting rare books, he didn't give a good damn about anything else.)





RACE WAR,

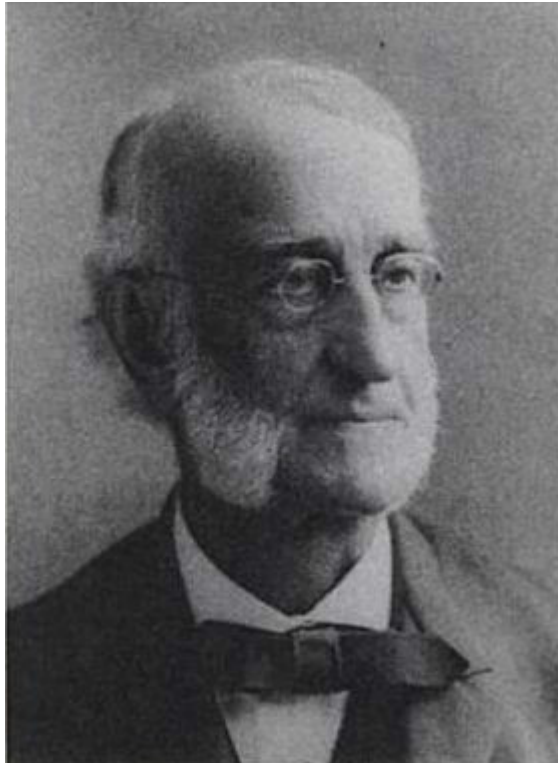
NOT CIVIL WAR

December 6, Saturday: A story by [Louisa May Alcott](#) appeared in Boston's Saturday Evening Gazette, entitled "Ruth's Secret."



After making his way back home to Concord and spending the Thanksgiving holiday with his family, [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to his friend H.G.O. Blake [H.G.O. BLAKE](#) in Worcester about the overwhelming feeling of gratitude which he was experiencing:

I am grateful for what I am & have. My thanksgiving is perpetual. It is surprising how contented one can be with nothing definite – only a sense of existence –



In this letter he also attempted to describe the experiences he had had in the train depot in Blake's town in the cold before-dawn hours of Tuesday, November 25th while on his way home from [Eagleswood, New Jersey](#). He had taken a walk up to Theophilus Brown's tailor shop, which at the time was in Butman Row (on the site of the present Slater Building), and peered within, deciding not to attempt to return Brown's Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science and Art by leaving it in the door handle:

Concord Dec 6 '56

*Mr Blake, What is wanting above
is merely an engraving of Eagleswood, which
I have used. I trust that you got a*



RACE WAR,

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*note from me at Eagleswood about
a fortnight ago. I passed thro' [W]orcester
on the morning of the 25th of November,
and spent several hours (from 3.30 to 6.20)
in the travellers' room at the Depot,
as in a dream, it now seems. As the
first Nashua train unexpectedly connected
with the first from Fitchburg, I did not
spend the forenoon with you, as I had
anticipated, on account of baggage
&c — If it had been a reasonable hour
I should have seen you, i.e. if you had
not been gone to a horse-race. But
think of making a call at half past*

Page 2

*three in the morning! (Would it not have
implied a 3^o clock in the morning courage
in both you & me?) As it were ignoring
the fact that mankind are really not
at home — are not out, but so deeply
in that they cannot be seen — nearly half
their hours at this season of the year.
I walked up & down the Main Street at
half past 5 in the dark, and paused
long in front of Brown's store trying to
distinguish its features; considering whether
I might safely leave his "Putnam" in
the door handle, but concluded not
to risk it. Meanwhile a watchman ?
seemed to be watching me, & I moved
off. Took another turn round there,
had a little later — , and the very earliest
^ offer of the Transcript from an urchin
behind, whom I actually could not
see, it was so dark. — So I withdrew,*

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*wondering if you & B. would know
that I had been there. You little dream
who is occupying Worcester when you
are all asleep. Several things occurred
then that night, which I will venture to*



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

CAT

*say were not put into the Transcript. A
cat caught a mouse at the Depot,
& gave it to her kitten to play with. So
that world-famous tragedy goes on by
night as well as by day, & nature is emphat-
ically wrong. Also I saw a young Irish-
man kneel before his mother, as if in prayer,
while she wiped a cinder out of his eye with
her tongue; and I found that it was
never too late (or early?) to learn some-
thing. — These things transpired
while you & B. were, to all practical
purposes, [nowhere], & good for nothing —
not even for society, — not for horse-races,
— nor the taking back of a P[utnam's] Mag[azine].
It is true, I might have recalled you
to life, but it would have been a
cruel act, considering the kind of
life you would have come back to.
However, I would fain write
to you now by broad [daylight], and
report to you some of my life, such
as it is, and recall you to your life, {written vertically through top of
letter: Left on the stove too long.}*

Page 4
*which is not always lived by you, even
by day light.
Blake! Blake! are you awake?
Are you aware what an ever-glorious
morning this is? — What long expected
never to be repeated opportunity is now
offered to get life & knowledge?
For my part I am trying to wake
up, — to wring slumber out of my
pores; — For, generally, I take events as
unconcernedly as a fence post, — absorb
wet & cold like it, and am pleasantly tickled
with lichens slowly spreading over me.
Could I not be content then to be a
cedar post, which lasts 25 years? Would
I not rather be that than the farmer
that set it? or he that preaches*



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

*to that farmer — ? — & go to the heaven
of posts at last? I think I should
like ~~to be~~ that as well as any would
like it. But I should not care if
I sprouted into a living tree, put forth
leaves & flowers, & bore fruit.
I am grateful for what I am &
have. My thanksgiving is perpetual.
It is surprising how contented one can
be with nothing definite — only a sense of*

Page 5

<Eagleswood again all cut off

*existence — Well anything for variety.
I am ready to try this for the next
10000 years, & exhaust it. How sweet
to think of! [M]y extremities well charred,
and my intellectual part too, so that
there is no danger of worm or rot for
a long while. My breath is sweet to
me. O how I laugh when I think
of my vague indefinite riches — No
run on my bank can drain it — for
my wealth is not possession but en-
joyment.*

*What are all these years made
for? And how another winter [come],
so much like the last? Cant we
satisfy the beggars once for all?
Have you got in your wood*

Page 6

*for this winter? What else have you
got in? Of what use a great fire
on the hearth & a confounded little
fire in the heart? Are you pre-
pared to make a decisive campaign —
to pay for your costly tuition — to pay for
the suns of past summers — for happi-
ness & unhappiness lavished upon you?
Does not Time go by swifter than*



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

*the swiftest equine trotter or racker?
Stir up Brown — [R]emind him of
his duties, which outrun the date &
span of Worceste[r's] years past & to
come. Tell him to be sure that he is
on the Main Street, however narrow it
may be — & to have a lit sign, visible
by night as well as by day.
Are they not patient waiters — they
who wait for us? But even they shall*

Page 7

not be losers.

Dec. 7th

*That Walt Whitman, of whom I wrote
to you, is the most interesting fact to me
at present. I have just read his 2nd edition
(which he gave me) and it has done me
more good than any reading for a long time.
Perhaps I remember best the poem of
Walt Whitman An American & the
Sun Down Poem — There are 2 or 3 pieces
in the book which are disagreeable
to say the least, simply sensual. He
does not celebrate love at all — It is as
if the beasts spoke. I think that men
have not been ashamed of themselves
without reason. No doubt, there have
always been dens where such deeds were
unblushingly recited, and it is no merit
to compete with their inhabitants. But
even on this side, he has spoken more
truth than any American or modern
that I know. I have found his poem
exhilarating — encouraging. As for its
sensuality, — & it may turn out to be
less sensual than it appears — I do
not so much wish that those parts
were not written, as that men & women
were so pure that they could read*

Page 8

them without harm, that is without



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

understanding them. One woman told me that no woman could read it — as if a man could read what a woman could not. Of course Walt Whitman can communicate to us no experience, and if we are shocked, ~~and~~ ~~if we are shocked~~ whose experience is it that we are reminded of? On the whole it sounds to me very brave & American, after whatever deductions. I do not believe that all the sermons so called that have been preached in this land put together are equal to it for preaching — We ought to rejoice greatly in him. He occasionally suggests something a little more than human. You cant confound him with the other inhabitants of Brooklyn or New York. How they must shudder when they read him! He is awefully good. To be sure I ~~am~~ sometimes feel a little imposed on — By his heartiness & broad generalities he puts me into a liberal frame of mind prepared to see wonders — as it were sets me upon a hill or in the midst of a plain — stirs me well up, and then[—]throws in a thousand of brick. Though rude & sometimes ineffectual, it is

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a great primitive poem — an alarum or trumpet note ringing through the American Camp. Wonderfully like the orientals too, considering that when I asked him if he had read them he answered “No! tell me about them.” I did not get far in conversation with him — two more being present, and among the few things which I chanced to say, I remember that one was, in answer to him as representing America, that I did not think much of America or of politics & so on — Which may have been some-



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

*what of a damper to him.
Since I have seen him I find
that I am not disturbed by any brag
or egoism in his book. He may turn
out the least of a braggart of all, having
a better right to be confident.
He is a great fellow —
H. D. T.*

One might wonder, on reading this analysis of Walt Whitman's poems, whether [Thoreau](#) might have been a closet Puritan. This passage in [WALDEN](#) is often considered to be dyed-in-the-wool Puritanism:

[WALDEN](#): All sensuality is one, though it takes many forms; all purity is one. It is the same whether a man eat, or drink, or cohabit, or sleep sensually. They are but one appetite, and we only need to see a person do any one of these things to know how great a sensualist he is. The impure can neither stand nor sit with purity. When the reptile is attacked at one mouth of his burrow, he shows himself at another. If you would be chaste, you must be temperate. What is chastity? How shall a man know if he is chaste? He shall not know it. We have heard of this virtue, but we know not what it is. We speak conformably to the rumor which we have heard. From exertion come wisdom and purity; from sloth ignorance and sensuality.

It is, however, not. You will note that this passage is bracketed in [WALDEN](#) with a troubling pithy remark above it and another troubling pithy remark below it. Above this passage we find "He is blessed who is assured that the animal is dying out in him day by day, and the divine being established." Below it we find "Nature is hard to be overcome, but she must be overcome."

Recognizing the fact that this sort of talk gives a lot of folks nowadays the heartburn — I need to say that I personally agree with Thoreau's analysis of Walt Whitman's poetry, and with everything he wrote at this point in [WALDEN](#). The reason is simple: this world we live in is by nature indecent, uncaring, unkind, and unforgiving. The only decency, the only caring, the only kindness, the only forgiveness that we will ever discover in this world, must be the decency, the caring, the kindness, the forgiveness that we ourselves can find in ourselves to import into it. We are the source of this, we are the donors. If decency cannot come from us -- it cannot be here at all. (That's why it's termed **human** decency.)



You little dream who is occupying Worcester when you are all asleep. Several things occurred there that night which I will venture to say were not put into the Transcript. A cat caught a mouse at the depot, and gave it to her kitten to play with. So that world-famous tragedy goes on by night as well as by day, and nature is **emphatically** wrong.

Also I saw a young Irishman kneel before his mother, as if in prayer, while she wiped a cinder out of his eye with her tongue; and I found that it was never too late (or early?) to learn something....

CAT



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Our [Henry](#) was awake, for he had finally had his full *tiandi bu ren, yi wanwu wei chugou* experience:



道德經

"The natural realm is without/outside human benevolence; it treats everything as mere straw dogs."

天地不仁，以萬物為芻狗

If, that is, we desire this to be a world which includes benevolence, we must ourselves create benevolence within our own human realm — for this is not to be found unless it is created and is not to be created unless it is we who create it.

37. And this is the man whose most recent biographer insists is "probably the greatest spokesman of the last two hundred years for the view that we must turn ... to nature for our morality" (Robert D. Richardson, Jr., page 191), whose "life was far more an imitation



of Apollo than of Christ" and who was "not interested in a religion that strove to redeem man from this world, or to raise him above it" (192), a man who sought "knowledge, not grace" (193). This biographer has only one word for the above incident, and that a derogatory dismissive word: "astonishing" (357). Clearly, Richardson, thinking he is writing biography, has instead been writing autobiography (or, supposing that he had a seance with Thoreau's soul, he has instead been listening to a rapping from Emerson), for this incident bore directly on a disagreement between Friend [Lucretia Mott](#) and [Waldo Emerson](#) in regard to his "The Law of Success" essay —the one that claimed that nature utilized not only the good but also the bad— for Lucretia's reaction to that Emersonian lecture was "human wickedness works only evil, and that continually." Clearly, also, Richardson's got ahold of Thoreau's corpus by a leg and I've got ahold by an arm, and we're going to tug until we see whose piece includes the head and heart of Thoreau.

Emphatically Wrong



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

In his [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#), page 362, our [Henry](#) had asserted³⁸ that

[A WEEK](#): We have heard much about the poetry of mathematics, but very little of it has yet been sung. The ancients had a juster notion of their poetic value than we. The most distinct and beautiful statement of any truth must take at last the mathematical form. We might so simplify the rules of moral philosophy, as well as of arithmetic, that one formula would express them both. All the moral laws are readily translated into natural philosophy, for often we have only to restore the primitive meaning of the words by which they are expressed, or to attend to their literal instead of their metaphorical sense. They are already **supernatural** philosophy. The whole body of what is now called moral or ethical truth existed in the golden age as abstract science. Or, if we prefer, we may say that the laws of Nature are the purest morality. The Tree of Knowledge is a Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. He is not a true man of science who does not bring some sympathy to his studies, and expect to learn something by behavior as well as by application. It is childish to rest in the discovery of mere coincidences, or of partial and extraneous laws. The study of geometry is a petty and idle exercise of the mind, if it is applied to no larger system than the starry one. Mathematics should be mixed not only with physics but with ethics, **that is mixed** mathematics. The fact which interests us most is the life of the naturalist. The purest science is still biographical. Nothing will dignify and elevate science while it is sundered so wholly from the moral life of its devotee, and he professes another religion than it teaches, and worships at a foreign shrine. Anciently the faith of a philosopher was identical with his system, or, in other words, his view of the universe.





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And in his Journal for June 30, 1852, our [Henry](#) had asserted that

Nature must be viewed humanly to be viewed at all; that is, her scenes must be associated with humane affections, such as are associated with one's native place, for instance. She is most significant to a lover. A lover of Nature is pre-eminently a lover of man. If I have no friend, what is Nature to me? She ceases to be morally significant.

In a contrast between William Wordsworth's poetry and William Wordsworth's philosophizing or

38. The poet W.H. Auden has in 1962 brought forward part of this from [A WEEK](#) as:

THE VIKING BOOK OF APHORISMS, A PERSONAL SELECTION BY W.H. AUDEN...

Pg	Topic	Aphorism Selected by Auden out of Thoreau
259	Science	He is not a true man of science who does not bring some sympathy to his studies, and expect to learn something by behavior as well as by application. It is childish to rest in the discovery of mere coincidences, or of partial and extraneous laws. The study of geometry is a petty and idle exercise of the mind, if it is applied to no larger system than the starry one. Mathematics should be mixed not only with physics but with ethics; that is mixed mathematics. The fact which interests us most is the life of the naturalist. The purest science is still biographical.



RACE WAR,

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philosophastering, C.S. Lewis has offered:



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Nor have many people been taught moral philosophy by an "impulse from a vernal wood." If they were, it would not necessarily be the sort of moral philosophy Wordsworth would have approved. It might be that of ruthless competition. For some moderns I think it is. They love nature in so far as, for them, she calls to "the dark gods in the blood"; not although, but because, sex and hunger and sheer power there operate without pity or shame. If you take nature as a teacher she will teach you exactly the lessons you have already decided to learn; this is only another way of saying that nature does not teach. The tendency to take her as a teacher is obviously very easily grafted on to the experience we call "love of nature." But it is only a graft. While we are actually subjected to them, the "moods" and "spirits" of nature point no morals. Overwhelming gaiety, insupportable grandeur, sombre desolation are flung at you. Make what you can of them, if you must make at all. The only imperative that nature utters is, "Look. Listen. Attend." The fact that this imperative is so often misinterpreted and sets people making theologies and pantheologies and antitheologies -all of which can be debunked- does not really touch the central experience itself. What nature-lovers -whether they are Wordsworthians or people with "dark gods in their blood"- get from nature is an iconography, a language of images. I do not mean simply visual images; it is the "moods" or "spirits" themselves -the powerful expositions of terror, gloom, jocundity, cruelty, lust, innocence, purity- that are the images. In them each man can clothe his own belief. We must learn our theology or philosophy elsewhere (not surprisingly, we often learn them from theologians and philosophers). But when I speak of "clothing" our belief in such images I do not mean anything like using nature for similes or metaphors in the manner of the poets. Indeed I might have said "filling" or "incarnating" rather than clothing. Many people -I am one myself- would never, but for what nature does to us, have had any content to put into the words we must use in confessing our faith. Nature never taught me that there exists a God of glory and of infinite majesty. I had to learn that in other ways. But nature gave the word **glory** a meaning for me. I still do not know where else I could have found one. I do not see how the "fear" of God could have ever meant to me anything but the lowest prudential efforts to be safe, if I had never seen certain ominous ravines and unapproachable crags. And if nature had never awakened certain longings in me, huge areas of what I can now mean by the "love" of God would never, so far as I can



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Now, C.S. Lewis might be classed as a person who evidently had never been exposed to the *geist* of [Thoreau](#). For I think he never refers to Thoreau in his writings on religion, even in the most appropriate locations. The moral conclusion I derive from the above quotation is that –since even non-Thoreauvian popular writers can “get it,” we should speak firmly, even harshly, to “Thoreauvians” who refuse to “get it” on this point of nature and morality, and continue to credit their Thoreau with some simpleminded nature-worship or with some ethic derived from naturalness or whatever, some shallow belief system derived not from Thoreau’s materials but from their own lack of thoughtfulness.

While Thoreau was undergoing this spiritual upheaval, [John Brown](#) was indulging in unlimited revolutionary scheming with [Frederick Douglass](#) at the Douglass home outside Rochester, New York. How could the black people of the South be induced to rise up in a suicidal violent attempt to produce a circulation of the elites, a replacement of a repressive white ruling caste with a progressive black ruling caste? (—Or die in the attempt—)



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1857

[Eli Thayer](#) of Worcester, Massachusetts sought to create an antislavery town in western Virginia (now West Virginia), naming the town “Ceredo” after the goddess Ceres. Fellow abolitionist [Zopher D. Ramsdell](#) of Maine went there to set up a boot and shoe factory, and it would seem that the basement of his home there was used as an [Underground Railroad](#) waystation to secret escaping slaves before they made their voyage across the Ohio River into Lawrence County, Ohio.

According to Louis Thomas Jones’s *THE QUAKERS OF IOWA* (Iowa City: Iowa State Historical Society, 1914):

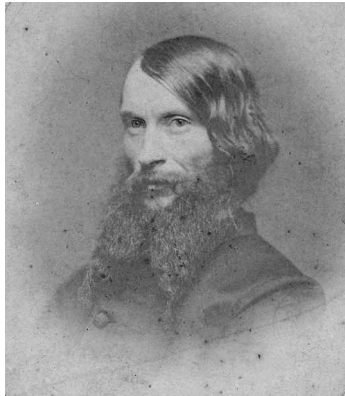
Showing the signs of [tuberculosis](#), [Barclay Coppoc](#) went to [Kansas](#) in 1857 for his health, and while there is said to have taken part in some of [John Brown](#)’s expeditions in that state.

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During this year and the following one [Thaddeus Hyatt](#) would become so interested in the possibilities of human flight that he would offer “a reward of \$1,000 to any inventor able to produce an actual flying machine.”



The US federal government and the Seneca Indian tribe signed a treaty at Tonawanda, [New York](#) by which the tribe repurchased local reservation lands using funds from the exchange and sale of its reservation lands in [Kansas](#).

The [Lecompton Constitution](#) was written by a pro-slave convention in the [Kansas Territory](#). A free-state-dominated territorial legislature would be chosen in the fall elections. Emporia and Abilene were founded.

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Christian Sharps finally began to manufacture the breech-loading rifle in quantity, which he had invented back in 1848.



After they would take Captain John Brown’s Sharps rifle away from him at Harpers Ferry, they would allow this little Southern boy to pose with it. — Grow up, son, and be a Christian like us: kill people, own slaves.

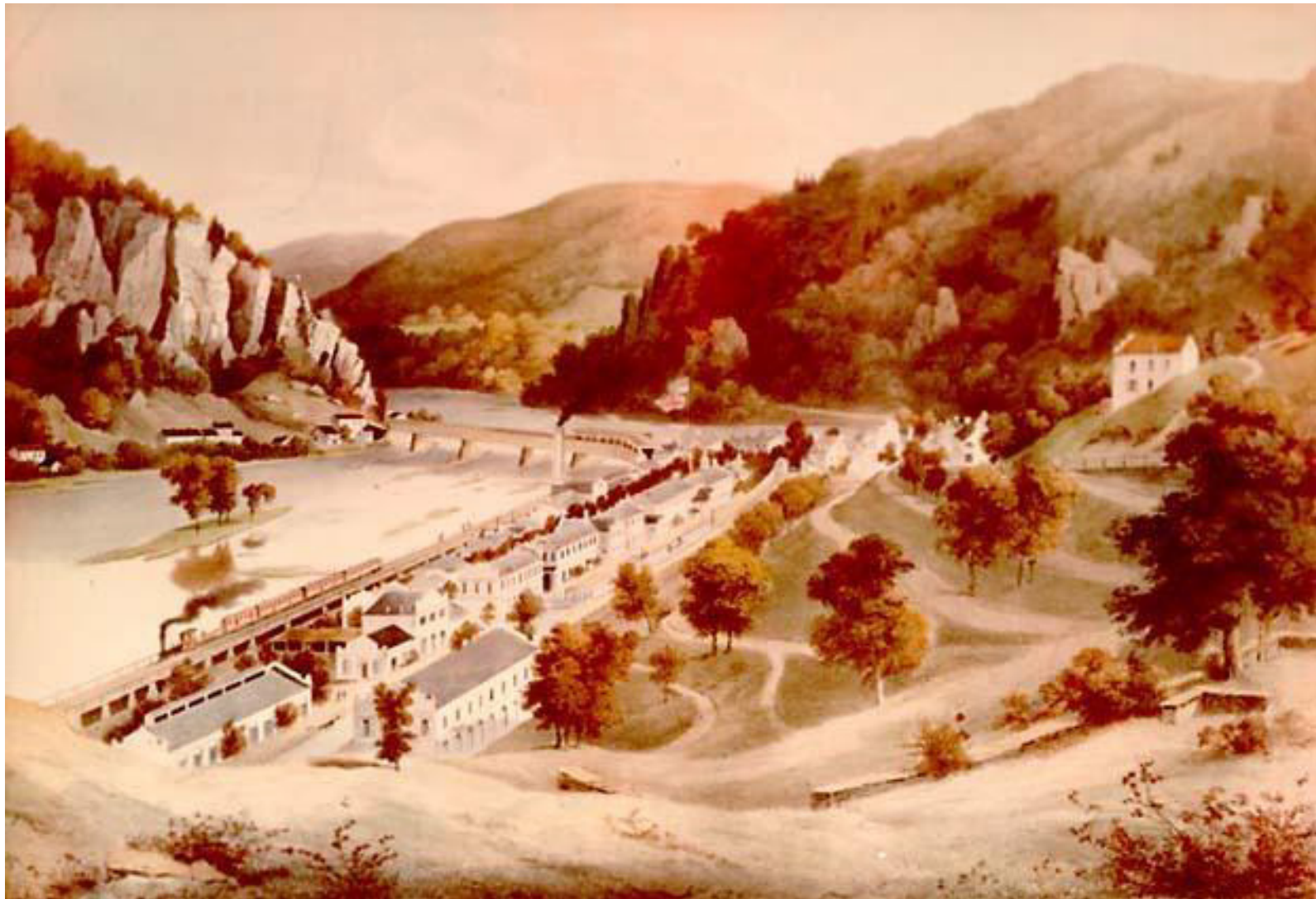
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The National [Kansas](#) Committee would meet with [John Brown](#) early in this year and indirectly provide him with 200 of these Sharps rifles, which he would take to [Harpers Ferry](#) (but the Committee would then run out of money and largely renege on its promise of \$5,000).

Here is how [Harpers Ferry](#) was being depicted, in this year, in Edward Beyer's ALBUM ON VIRGINIA:

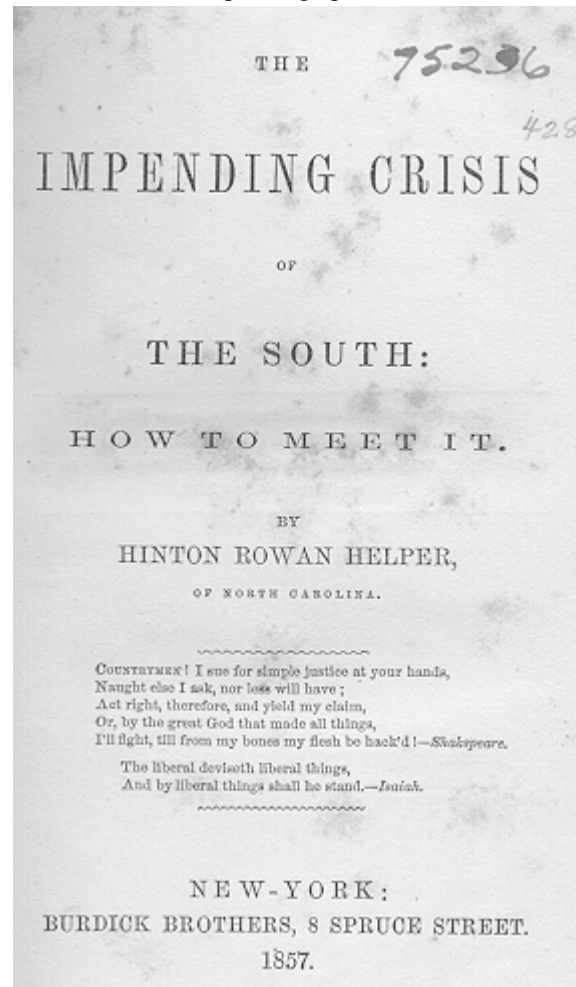




RACE WAR,

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Hinton Rowan Helper's polemical compilation of census data *THE IMPENDING CRISIS OF THE SOUTH: HOW TO MEET IT* was published in [Baltimore](#), expanding upon what we now have come to regard as a pleasant



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conceit—the idea that oppression actually is unprofitable to the oppressor—and proclaiming also the pleasant conceit that [Waldo Emerson](#), who had originally espoused this idea in the 1844 “EMANCIPATION IN THE



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BRITISH WEST INDIES”, was America’s “most practical and profound metaphysician.” Hoo boy!



This Emerson-admirer was an egregious case of what you would term an Antislavery Racist. –Which is to say, he was a Southern white man, from [North Carolina](#), who owned no slaves, whose fixation was that he was being victimized. It wasn’t the blacks who were being harmed by slavery, it was real decent folks, white folks like him who were being harmed by slavery. All these darkies, who belonged to other people, were impacting his life! He hated the nigger who was doing him wrong, he hated the slavemaster who was doing him wrong. What he needed most urgently was a lily-white, pure America of which he could be proud, where he could stand tall. Slavery was a tainted and archaic social system that was standing in the way of white people’s cultural and material progress. Blacks were a tainted and inferior group who had no business being over here, in our brave New World, in the first place.³⁹



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"History, among its many ironies, often places enemies in life into various positions of posthumous conjunction."

— Stephen Jay Gould



This antislavery [racism](#), which did not want slaves to exist because it did not want blacks to exist, is to be compared and contrasted with the proslavery [racism](#) of the Irishman John Mitchel, who, as long as blacks did exist, needed for them to exist as slaves. In this year Mitchel gave up trying to become a farmer and created the Southern Citizen.



According to Noel Ignatiev's **HOW THE IRISH BECAME WHITE**, "To be acknowledged as white, it was not enough for the Irish to have a competitive advantage over Afro-Americans in the labor market; in order for them to avoid the taint of blackness it was necessary that no Negro be allowed to work in occupations where Irish were to be found."



IRISH PHYSIOGNOMY.

According to the jokes that were going the rounds in those days among non-Irish white racists (the bulk of the population, actually), the Irish were "Negroes turned inside out" while the American free blacks were "smoked Irish."

It has been well said, that inside the charmed Caucasian chalk circle it is the sum of what you are not -not Indian, not Negro, not a Jew, not Irish, etc.- that make you what you are. And, that's as true now as it was then.

39. Hinton Rowan Helper. THE IMPENDING CRISIS OF THE SOUTH: HOW TO MEET IT. [Baltimore](#), Maryland, 1857 This interesting book has been republished in Cambridge MA in 1968. For more on this guy and his not-all-that-novel conceit that the victims were victimizing him and needed to be trumped, see Bailey, Hugh C. HINTON ROWAN HELPER: ABOLITIONIST-RACIST (University AL: 1965).

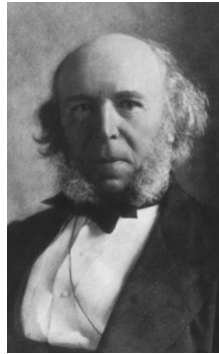


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A crisis would break out in the discussions of this attitude about how to achieve progress, in December 1859 during the uproar over the [John Brown](#) raid on [Harpers Ferry](#) by abolitionists.

Speaking of progress, in this year in England, [Herbert Spencer](#)'s article "Progress: its Law and Cause" began to apply his one big idea, a principle that he had derived from K.E. von Baer, that the biological development of an organism proceeds from a homogenous state to a heterogeneous state, to the solar system, to animal species, to human society, to industry, to art, to language, to science, and to the kitchen sink. This infatuation eventually led to his friend Thomas Henry Huxley commenting about him that Spencer's idea of a tragedy was "a deduction killed by a fact."



[Mary Ann Shadd Cary](#) gave birth to a daughter, Sarah. In this period her gazette [The Provincial Freeman](#) was becoming encumbered in debt.

In this year George Fitzhugh's CANNIBALS ALL! OR, SLAVES WITHOUT MASTERS was printed in Richmond VA by the firm of A. Morris. This author would oppose [secession](#) until [civil war](#) began, arguing that a slaveholding [Confederacy](#) could not survive until the advanced capitalist countries had likewise abandoned capitalist competition and its bourgeois individualism. After the loss of the war both Helper and Fitzhugh would become more and more negrophobic, more and more idiosyncratic, and sink into obscurity.

[Elizabeth A. Parkhill Gloucester](#) and [the Reverend James Newton Gloucester](#) opened a furniture store at 881 W. Broadway in [New-York](#). Alfred P. Gloucester was born (this toddler would die during 1859).

The Reverend [Stephen Smith](#) built the Zion Mission Church at 7th and Lombard Streets in Philadelphia, and because his family was spending its summers in Cape May, New Jersey, it was largely through his efforts that a black church was created there as well. When Olive Cemetery in Philadelphia was repossessed and put up for bids in a sheriff's auction, it was he who preserved it as a place of burial for blacks. He helped to create a Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Persons (which would eventually be located at 44th Street and Girard avenue, Philadelphia).

Dun and Company, a firm that evaluated local businesses, estimated [Stephen Smith](#) and [William Whipper](#)'s annual sales at \$100,000, characterizing Smith as "King of the Darkies." He was on his way to becoming one of the wealthiest black Americans in 19th-Century Pennsylvania.



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The mulatto [Lewis Sheridan Leary](#) went to [Oberlin, Ohio](#) to live.



(He would marry there and make the acquaintance of [John Brown](#) in Cleveland. To go to [Harpers Ferry](#), he would leave behind his wife with a 6-month-old child at Oberlin, she being in ignorance of the purpose of his trip. He was given funds to go from Oberlin to Chambersburg in the company of his nephew [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#), a student at [Oberlin College](#). He would get isolated along with his nephew and [John Henry Kagi](#)



in the armory called Hall's Rifle Works. When the three men would make a run for it, heading down to the Shenandoah River, they would get themselves caught in a crossfire, and after Kagi had been killed and Leary shot several times, he would be taken, his wounds so severe that he would die the following morning. He would be able to dictate messages to his family and is reported as saying "I am ready to die." The Leary child would subsequently be educated by [James Redpath](#) and [Wendell Phillips](#).)

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CANNIBALS ALL!

OR,

SLAVES WITHOUT MASTERS.

BY

GEORGE FITZHUGH,

OF FORT ROYAL, CAROLINE, VA.

"His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him."—GEN. xvi. 12.

"Physician, heal thyself."—LUKE iv. 23.

RICHMOND, VA.

A. MORRIS, PUBLISHER.



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[Charles Plummer Tidd](#) joined [John Brown](#)'s party at Mount Tabor and [Springdale](#), Iowa. During the Winter 1857/1858 encampment of the Brown forces in the Iowa Territory, he would "ruin" a [Quaker](#) girl and the other members of the team would help him sneak him away during the night. Nevertheless, the group would obtain some recruits not overly impressed with the [Peace Testimony](#) of George Fox from among the residents, such as the brothers [Barclay Coppoc](#) and [Edwin Coppoc](#).



[Tidd](#) would become one of the followers of "Shubel Morgan" who would return to Kansas in 1858 to raid into Missouri. He opposed the attack on [Harpers Ferry](#) but would nevertheless take part both in the raid on the planter Washington's home and on the federal arsenal itself, escape, and made his way on foot toward the northwestern part of Pennsylvania.

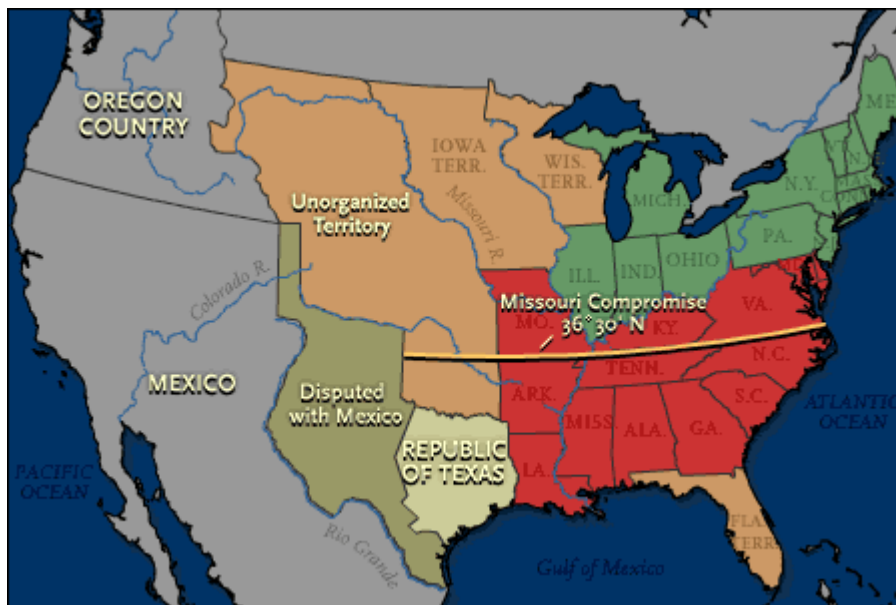
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In previous years, Indiana Friends who had been disowned by their Orthodox Indiana Yearly Meeting due to their [antislavery](#) sentiments had formed an association of their own, known as “Anti-Slavery Friends of Indiana.” In this year the Orthodox Yearly Meeting that had disowned them decided that it would allow them to rejoin the [Religious Society of Friends](#) without requiring any “acknowledgment of wrongdoing” for having previously been seduced into supposing human slavery to be an abomination. Nearly all of them therefore rejoined the Orthodox Indiana Yearly Meeting, and the Anti-Slavery Friends of Indiana was laid down.

Hey, here come d’judge. The freedoms and liberties of America’s slavemasters were protected by the US Supreme Court’s Dred Scott decision. In this year and the next President Buchanan’s pro-slavery policies, combined with this determination that slaves are not freed when they are moved into free states with their owners, that Congress can not bar slavery from a territory, and that blacks could not become citizens, would kill off both the Whig and the [Know-Nothing](#) parties. In *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, the Supremes in effect declared that the already-discarded Missouri Compromise of 1820 had been unconstitutional because the effect of it had been to deprive citizens –white people– of their property –black people– without due process of law.



The court also determined that slaves were neither citizens of any state nor citizens of the USA (this latter part



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of the decision would be overturned in 1868 by ratification of the XIVth Amendment).



This man had no rights that any white American was bound to respect. None at all. Nope.

We ought to notice, says Richard F. Teichgraeber III, that for five years after the summer of 1854 (with its agitation against the infamous [Daniel Webster](#) sellout that produced the Fugitive Slave Law), “Thoreau chose not to speak again in public against slavery.” In particular, he allowed this year of 1857 (with its Dred Scott supreme court decision that no American slave had any rights which any American slaveholder was obliged to respect), to pass “without any comment in his diary, private letters, or later published writings.” Although [Henry Thoreau](#) would in 1862 visit the site at which Dred and Harriet Scott had been held in slavery, on the grounds of a US military reservation south of St. Paul, [Minnesota](#), Teichgraeber points out that evidently at this point he was “unclear” as to exactly how he might effectively intercede in the nation’s racial situation. Only when [John Brown](#) entered the picture would Thoreau find his way clear “to take an effective stand for abolition.”

RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

New Years: According to Utagawa Hiroshige, foxes had gathered at an old hackberry tree in homage to the rice field god, for whom the fox serves as messenger, just before the New Year. The foxes had set a number of foxfires, which the rice farmers could count in order to anticipate their upcoming harvest:





RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

A few days after New Year's in 1857 on a windy, bitter cold afternoon in Boston, a somber-faced man named [John Brown](#) appeared at the offices of the Massachusetts Kansas Committee. The gray-haired, fifty-six-year-old abolitionist had recently returned from the Kansas Territory, where for over a year he had helped lead the struggle against slavery. Brown believed that armed force had to be used to prevent a proslavery takeover in Kansas, and he had come east seeking funds to further free-state military efforts. After introducing himself and presenting this references, he was welcomed by the committee's newly appointed secretary, young [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#).



THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

Their meeting began a three-year relationship, during which Sanborn and five prominent abolitionists –the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#), the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#), [Gerrit Smith](#), and [George Luther Stearns](#)– would not only help Brown collect funds for Kansas, but would also form a secret committee to subsidize his [Harpers Ferry](#) raid. By March 1858, these six men had become engaged in a conspiracy to provide the cash, arms, and equipment for Brown's violent thrust at [slavery](#). They supported Brown's plan to "make a dash" south, incite a slave uprising, and retreat into the mountains of Virginia, where a fortress would be established and other similar attacks prepared.





RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

February 18, Wednesday: The remains of Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka were deposited in Berlin, in the presence of 9 people including [Giacomo Meyerbeer](#) and an official from the Russian embassy.

Liebestreu op.3/1, a song by [Johannes Brahms](#) to words of Reinick, was performed for the initial time, in Göttingen.

In the hall of the Massachusetts House of Representatives in Boston, [Chaplain Daniel Foster](#) and an large crowd listened as Captain [John Brown](#) offered testimony about the [Kansas Territory](#) troubles before the state committee on Federal Relations.




[Chaplain Foster](#) would inform [the Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) in April that he wanted to emigrate to the [Kansas Territory](#) because he was

... convinced that our cause must receive a baptism of blood before it can be victorious. I expect to serve in Capt. John Brown's company in the next Kansas war; which I hope is inevitable & near at hand.

John A.W. Jones put a bullet into the forehead of [Sheriff William T. Sherrard](#) during a public rally in [Leecompton](#) in the [Kansas Territory](#) (Jones, surrounded and protected by friends, would be able to safely reach his home in Pennsylvania).

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION



February 18: I am excited by this wonderful air and go listening for the note of the bluebird [**Eastern Bluebird**  *Sialia sialis*] or other comer. The very grain of the air seems to have undergone a change and is ready to split into the form of the bluebird's warble. Methinks if it were visible, or I could cast up some fine dust which would betray it, it would take a corresponding shape. The bluebird does not come till the air consents and his wedge will enter easily. The air over these fields is a foundry full of molds for casting bluebirds' warbles. Any sound uttered now would take that form, not of the harsh, vibrating, rending scream of the jay, but a softer, flowing, curling warble, like a purling stream or the lobes of flowing sand and clay. Here is the soft air and moist expectant apple trees, but not yet the bluebird. They do not yet quite attain to song.

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RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

March: [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) brought [John Brown](#) to speak at the [Concord](#) City Hall and introduced him to [Henry Thoreau](#) during the noon meal, which they had at the Thoreau boarding house. Thoreau spent the



afternoon discoursing with Brown (Brown told Thoreau about the battle in the [Kansas Territory](#) of June 1856) and, as [Waldo Emerson](#) had just returned from a lecture tour, introduced them to one another. It is likely, however, that Emerson and Brown had already met at an earlier, privileged meeting at the home of the millionaire railroader [John Murray Forbes](#) in Milton, Massachusetts, a meeting to which they would not been likely to refer in the presence of Thoreau. Brown spoke of the struggle in the [Kansas Territory](#) in June of the previous year. In visiting the Thoreau home, he met [John Thoreau, Senior](#). We may notice in Emerson's journal that he sided with John Brown the strong white defender of the victim negro, against the Sermon on the Mount. In the following snippet from his journal, the Reverend Emerson is proclaiming in effect that the injunction "resist not evil" is a dangerous piece of mushyheadedness, and that what we need to do to make our nation into a kinder gentler America is to go out and kill some of the people who are preventing our nation from being a



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

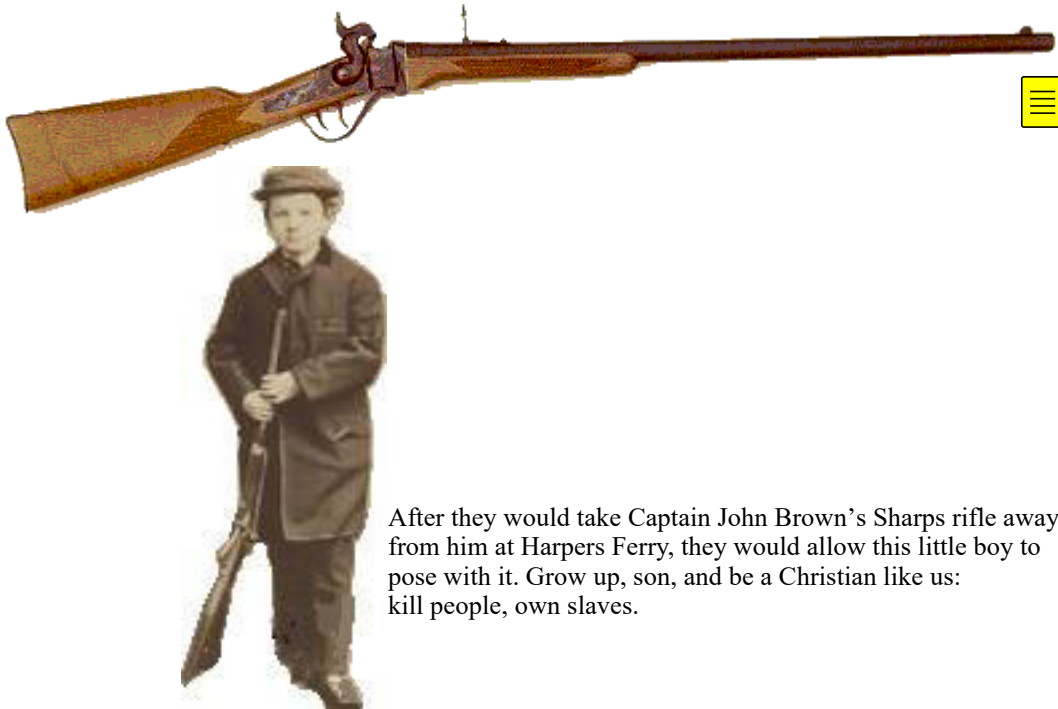
kind gentle America.⁴⁰

Captain John Brown of Kansas gave a good account of himself in the Town Hall, last night, to a meeting of Citizens. One of his good points was, the folly of the peace party in Kansas, who believed, that their strength lay in the greatness of their wrongs, & so discountenanced resistance. He wished to know if their wrong was greater than the negro's, & what kind of strength that gave to the negro?

The elder [John Thoreau](#) helped purchase for Brown one of Christian Sharps's "ten rounds per minute" 1853-model breech-loading cap-and-ball carbine, 37 ³/₄ inches overall with a 21 ³/₄-inch rifled barrel, that used a

40. We may remind ourselves, as we read the above, that back during February 1854 [Waldo Emerson](#) had been scheming with the saintly [Bronson Alcott](#) on a different-but-strangely-similar final solution to the American race problem, a solution in which white men would castrate all their black men so that only the white owners would be able to fecundate their black women. We might therefore want to turn the above jotting quite around, and inquire of Mr. Emerson and Mr. Alcott what kind of strength it gave to the black man to be castrated as they had been musing in February 1854, and what kind of strength it gave to the black woman to bear children which would be in successive generations lighter and purer, until finally their taint had been erased and we had arrived at an America of blond beastly angels. It is interesting to juxtapose the musing of 1854, in which we note that the Sermon on the Mount is quite disregarded, and the musing of 1857, in which we note that the Sermon on the Mount is quite disregarded. The musing of 1857 seem to be defending the black American but the musing of 1854 seemed to have been attacking the black American — so how did we get from the malevolence-against-the-black one to the succeeding malevolence-against-the-white one while continuing to quite disregard the Sermon on the Mount? (This is nothing if not perplexing. Perhaps someone can explain the transition.)

“pellet without cut-off” primer.⁴¹



After they would take Captain John Brown’s Sharps rifle away from him at Harpers Ferry, they would allow this little boy to pose with it. Grow up, son, and be a Christian like us: kill people, own slaves.

This weapon was being manufactured in Hartford, Connecticut, although the fishy Christian Sharps was then in the process of selling out and moving to Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, where he would set up another weapons manufactory. [Thoreau](#) also “subscribed a trifle.”⁴² We should not evade anything here: it is clear that [Waldo Emerson](#), donating \$25.⁰⁰, and the Thoreaus, did know at the time they made their donations that their money was to be applied not to provisions such as food or clothing but to the purchase of rifles and ammunition. Here are two company-solicited testimonials to this “hot thing” killing machine which Waldo Emerson, John Thoreau, Senior, and Henry David Thoreau helped to provide to John Brown. The first is dated

41. The version of this weapon sold to the Chinese government was inscribed “Old Reliable” in Chinese characters.

42. This phrase “subscribed a trifle” comes from his Journal entry of October 22, 1860 in which he is evidently wrestling with his conscience, perhaps feeling that he was unduly influenced in going along with his father in this matter: “I subscribed a trifle when he was here three years ago, I had so much confidence in the man –that he would do right,— ... I do not wish to kill or to be killed, but I can foresee circumstances in which both of these things would be by me unavoidable. In extremities I could even be killed.” (XII, 437) We must bear in mind that it would have been especially painful for Thoreau to have had a falling-out with his father during this period, as Thoreau’s father was going into a period of sickness which would last some two years and would end in his taking to his room for a few weeks, and then peacefully dying. During this period he would be, as Thoreau later described, “going down-town in pleasant weather, doing a little business from time to time, hoeing a little in the garden, etc.” He was coughing and raising material from his lungs. Normally a taciturn man, he was becoming noticeably more silent even than usual.



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“Magoffansville, Texas, June, 1853”:



The ten Sharps' carbines purchased of you were all put to immediate use in arming my escort, and for range, accuracy, and rapidity of firing, they are far superior to any arm known. They have gone through what an ordinance officer would term a pretty severe field test, without the least injury.

In all of our shooting of bear, deer, wolves, &c., I have never known the ball to be found in the animal. Having been a frontier man for fourteen years, I had occasion to look after a bosom companion to stand by me in case of life or death; and hence I have given some little attention to the subject of fire arms, and think I can tolerably well appreciate their excellence; and in my search after such a comforter, I have found no arm that in all its attributes begins to compare with the Sharps' arm and for army, navy, caravan or sporting service, it is sure to take and hold the front rank.

Capt. Henry Skillman,
U.S. Mail Contractor.

The second of these company-solicited testimonials is datelined Washington, January, 1855:



In answer to your inquiries, I take great pleasure in bearing testimony to the great value and use of Sharps' rifles. Upon two expeditions across the continent to California, I have had the ten rifles in active use the whole time in the field. With ten men armed with these rifles we felt equal to thirty. Its simplicity enabled the men to understand it at a glance, and they loaded and fired it with great accuracy and rapidity, killing game at four hundred and fifty yards. It inspired the men with great confidence in their strength and power to defend themselves against superior numbers. With ten men, a negro and a Mexican, I kept at bay one hundred and forty Apache warriors, all fully armed, just on the eve of an attack on Gov. Gardner's ranch in Sonora. I look upon it as far the best rifle and the only proper one for mounted men that I have ever seen.

Andrew B. Gray.

We must bear in mind that it would have been especially painful for [Thoreau](#) to have had a falling-out with his father during this period, as Thoreau's father [John Thoreau](#) was going into a period of sickness which would last some two years and would end in his taking to his room for a few weeks, and then peacefully dying. During this period he would be, as Thoreau later described, “going down-town in pleasant weather, doing a little



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business from time to time, hoeing a little in the garden, etc.” He was coughing and raising material from his lungs. Normally a taciturn man, he was becoming noticeably even more silent than usual.

Would the [John Murray Forbes](#) that Emerson had been meeting, the railroad magnate, be the daddy of the Forbes who would marry Emerson’s daughter? Would he have been related to the Scottish adventurer [Hugh Forbes](#) who would soon become [John Brown](#)’s principal lieutenant?⁴³ Captain Brown had read Forbes’s *MANUAL FOR THE PATRIOTIC VOLUNTEER; ON ACTIVE SERVICE IN REGULAR AND IRREGULAR WAR; BEING THE ART AND SCIENCE OF OBTAINING AND MAINTAINING LIBERTY AND INDEPENDENCE* (published in 1856), and Forbes’s pamphlet *DUTIES OF A SOLDIER*, while in the [Kansas Territory](#) and had discussed this with another English-emigrant-turned-writer, William A. Phillips. Forbes had written, “Right is that which is good true honorable just humane self-sacrificing — it is the opposite of wrong.” When Brown had come east on a fundraising mission, he had looked up Forbes in [New-York](#) and been impressed with his similar desire to do something about the lamentable “peculiar institution” of the American southlands, race slavery. Brown perceived the possibility of a political alliance with Forbes against the iniquity of race slavery, although Forbes believed that the black race was inherently inferior to the white, and immediately contracted with Forbes to train recruits to the cause in the [Kansas Territory](#) and at Mount Tabor, Iowa. Forbes was, however, a mercenary from the get-go, requiring his expenses plus a salary of \$100 a month, the 1st 6 months of which was to be paid in advance: Brown did agree to this.

During this month, at a racetrack in Savannah, Georgia, there was being transacted the largest auction of human beings in the history in the United States of America. During the two days it took to dispose of 436 men, women, and children, it was as if the heavens were crying, the rain fell so unceasingly. This auction would come to be known, appropriately, as “the weeping time.”

43. Captain [John Brown](#)’s scheme, which he referred to as the “Subterranean Pass Way,” was that the escaped, armed slaves were to “swarm” into and set up a center of resistance in the Alleghenies from which they could liberate Virginia and then invade Tennessee and northern Alabama. Such a scoping of the situation never met with much respect from other of the other schemers. In particular, the Scottish adventurer [Hugh Forbes](#), Brown’s onetime principal lieutenant, regarding blacks as inherently childlike, credulous, and cowardly, believed such a scheme to be doomed to failure from its inception. The scenario preferred by Forbes would have involved the herding of the slaves together by armed bands of white men and the driving of such herds of humans up the mountain chain toward Canada, neatly disposing of America’s entire race problem — by simple relocation of it to another country. Evidently the two planners parted company over issues such as this after Forbes had functioned in Tabor, Iowa as the leader of military training for the recruits, and then Forbes attempted blackmail. When not offered a payoff, he wrote long, detailed letters to congressmen and to others, and it is one of the unresolved issues, how anyone in high office in [Washington DC](#) could have avoided knowing in advance that Brown was plotting a strike of some sort against slavery.



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Some twenty years earlier the owners, the brothers Pierce and John Butler, had inherited their family's plantations, but Pierce, [Fanny Kemble Butler](#)'s ex-husband, had squandered his \$700,000 portion and, beyond that, gotten deeply into debt. Management of the estate was transferred to trustees who sold off Pierce's once grand but now dilapidated Philadelphia mansion for \$30,000. Other Butler properties were sold as well, but it was not enough to obtain for Pierce a continuation of his luxury, so he had the trustees turn to the Georgia plantations and their "movable" property.

At the time, the overall holdings of the Butler family included 900 slaves. Half of them, 450, were assigned to the estate of the brother John, who had since died, and would remain on the plantations. Of the other 450 – Pierce's half – about 20 would be allowed to continue to live in slavery on Butler property. The remainder were herded onto railway cars and steamboats and brought to the Broeck racetrack to be sold to the highest bidder. Philadelphia socialite Sidney George Fisher would note in his diary that "It is highly honorable to [Butler] that he did all he could to prevent the sale, offering to make any personal sacrifice to avoid it," but we don't know of any such sacrifice actually made. The two-day sale of 436 human beings netted \$303,850 for Butler, amply more than he needed to satisfy all his creditors. Of the auction, Fisher wrote:

It is a dreadful affair, however, selling these hereditary Negroes.... Families will not be separated, that is to say, husbands and wives, parents and young children. But brothers and sisters of mature age, parents and children of mature age, all other relations and the ties of home and long association will be violently severed. It will be a hard thing for Butler to witness and it is a monstrous thing to do. Yet it is done every day in the South. It is one among the many frightful consequences of slavery and contradicts our civilization, our Christianity, or Republicanism. Can such a system endure, is it consistent with humanity, with moral progress? These are difficult questions, and still more difficult is it to say, what can be done? The Negroes of the South must be slaves or the South will be Africanized. Slavery is better for them and for us than such a result.

Mortimer "Doesticks" Thomson, a popular newsman, wrote a lengthy, uncomplimentary article about the auction for the New-York [Tribune](#) under the headline "What Became of the Slaves on a Georgia Plantation." He reported how the slaves, eager to impress potential masters who they perceived as likely to be kind, would sometimes cheerfully respond to buyers "pulling their mouths open to see their teeth, pinching their limbs to find how muscular they were, walking them up and down to detect any signs of lameness, making them stoop and bend in different ways that they might be certain there was no concealed rupture or wound..." This white columnist commiserated with the unfortunate slaves after the sale, stating, "On the faces of all was an expression of heavy grief; some appeared to be resigned to the hard stroke of Fortune that had torn them from their homes, and were sadly trying to make the best of it; some sat brooding moodily over their sorrows, their chins resting on their hands, their eyes staring vacantly, and their bodies rocking to and fro, with a restless motion that was never stilled..." The highest price paid for one family – a mother with five grown children – had been \$6,180. The highest price for one individual had been \$1,750. The lowest price for one person was \$250. Soon after the last slave was sold, the rain stopped and champagne bottles were popped in celebration. Pierce, once again wealthy, would be able to make a trip to southern Europe before returning to reside to Philadelphia.

The Reverend [Samuel Joseph May](#) wrote to his cousin the Reverend [Samuel J. May, Jr.](#) to declare his embarrassment at having supported a party which had in effect to obtain votes for its candidate [John Charles](#)



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[Frémont](#) been pandering to racists, and had then **despite** such an extreme sacrifice failed to succeed at the national polls. He declared himself to be



glad the Republican Party did not succeed.



[Thoreau](#) wrote to someone named Adams.⁴⁴

At the invitation of Governor [Salmon Portland Chase](#), [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) lectured the Ohio legislature, promising worldly success to those like himself who were willing to risk all by taking their stand upon the firm bedrock of moral principle. (A pleasant fantasy, that! Civil War days would demonstrate that Conway was truly a master of the pleasant fantasy, could truly tell people what they longed to hear: Hark! Hark! I can see the light at the end of the tunnel! I have a plan for ending the bloodshed! All you need to do is pay some attention to me!)

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

March 4, Wednesday: An advertisement for a runaway [slave](#) appeared in the Baltimore [Sun](#):

\$20 REWARD - Ran away from the subscriber on or about the 18th or 20th of November, N E G R O "Rachel Bordley," or "Taylor," formerly living with Morris Sotler (Not sure of this word), about thirty years of age, 5 feet, 5 or 6 inches high,⁴⁵ rather bright copper color; the fore finger off at the second joint; scar on the back

44. There was a Frank Adams in the Concord area.

45. In descriptions of runaway [slaves](#), 5 feet 5 or 6 inches was the average height.



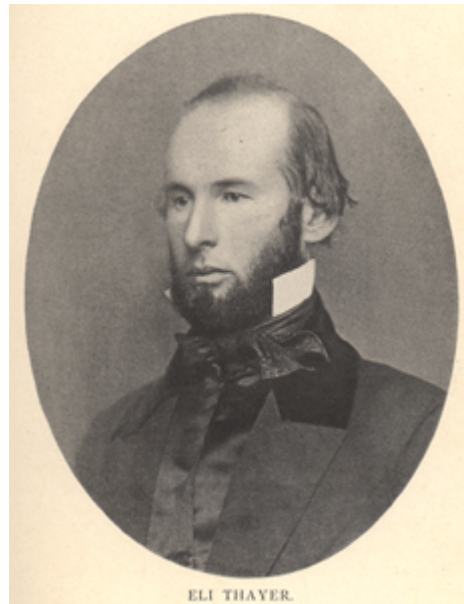
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of the same hand; rather quick spoken; formerly the slave of William Grimes, deceased, of Baltimore county, Md. To be secured in Baltimore city jail. For the last 4 or 5 years had been hired out as a house servant in the city of Baltimore,
DELIAH SIBRA
Baltimore county, Md.
Reference, No. 66 South Calvert street

[Jefferson Davis](#) resigned as Secretary of War and took the oath as Senator.

[Eli Thayer](#) was elected to the US House of Representatives from Massachusetts's 9th District, by a landslide vote of nearly 2 to 1.



James Buchanan became President of the United States of America, until March 3, 1861. When the Democratic Party had nominated Buchanan at its national convention, they had in effect abandoned their incumbent President, [Franklin Pierce](#). Buchanan had since the administration of Andrew Jackson been following a distinguished career as a Senator, Congressman, Cabinet officer, and ambassador. After a proud parade and before a gala ball for 6,000 celebrants in a specially built hall on Judiciary Square, Chief Justice Roger Taney administered the oath of office on the East Portico of the Capitol. This man was to go down in history as the 1st bachelor elected President, and the only one to remain unmarried⁴⁶ during his term of office.⁴⁷

Fellow-Citizens: I appear before you this day to take the solemn oath "that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States and will to the best of my ability preserve,

46. Since [Stephen Grover Cleveland](#) would marry his ward Frances Folsom during his term of office.

47. His niece Harriet Lane would assume some of the obligations normally performed by a First Lady.



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protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States." In entering upon this great office I must humbly invoke the God of our fathers for wisdom and firmness to execute its high and responsible duties in such a manner as to restore harmony and ancient friendship among the people of the several States and to preserve our free institutions throughout many generations. Convinced that I owe my election to the inherent love for the Constitution and the Union which still animates the hearts of the American people, let me earnestly ask their powerful support in sustaining all just measures calculated to perpetuate these, the richest political blessings which Heaven has ever bestowed upon any nation. Having determined not to become a candidate for reelection, I shall have no motive to influence my conduct in administering the Government except the desire ably and faithfully to serve my country and to live in grateful memory of my countrymen. We have recently passed through a Presidential contest in which the passions of our fellow-citizens were excited to the highest degree by questions of deep and vital importance; but when the people proclaimed their will the tempest at once subsided and all was calm. The voice of the majority, speaking in the manner prescribed by the Constitution, was heard, and instant submission followed. Our own country could alone have exhibited so grand and striking a spectacle of the capacity of man for self-government. What a happy conception, then, was it for Congress to apply this simple rule, that the will of the majority shall govern, to the settlement of the question of domestic slavery in the Territories. Congress is neither "to legislate slavery into any Territory or State nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States." As a natural consequence, Congress has also prescribed that when the [Territory of Kansas](#) shall be admitted as a State it "shall be received into the Union with or without slavery, as their constitution may prescribe at the time of their admission." A difference of opinion has arisen in regard to the point of time when the people of a Territory shall decide this question for themselves. This is, happily, a matter of but little practical importance. Besides, it is a judicial question, which legitimately belongs to the Supreme Court of the United States, before whom it is now pending, and will, it is understood, be speedily and finally settled. To their decision, in common with all good citizens, I shall cheerfully submit, whatever this may be, though it has ever been my individual opinion that under the Nebraska-Kansas act the appropriate period will be when the number of actual residents in the Territory shall justify the formation of a constitution with a view to its admission as a State into the Union. But be this as it may, it is the imperative and indispensable duty of the Government of the United States to secure to every resident inhabitant the free and independent expression of his opinion



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by his vote. This sacred right of each individual must be preserved. That being accomplished, nothing can be fairer than to leave the people of a Territory free from all foreign interference to decide their own destiny for themselves, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. The whole Territorial question being thus settled upon the principle of popular sovereignty—a principle as ancient as free government itself—everything of a practical nature has been decided. No other question remains for adjustment, because all agree that under the Constitution slavery in the States is beyond the reach of any human power except that of the respective States themselves wherein it exists. May we not, then, hope that the long agitation on this subject is approaching its end, and that the geographical parties to which it has given birth, so much dreaded by the Father of his Country, will speedily become extinct? Most happy will it be for the country when the public mind shall be diverted from this question to others of more pressing and practical importance. Throughout the whole progress of this agitation, which has scarcely known any intermission for more than twenty years, whilst it has been productive of no positive good to any human being it has been the prolific source of great evils to the master, to the slave, and to the whole country. It has alienated and estranged the people of the sister States from each other, and has even seriously endangered the very existence of the Union. Nor has the danger yet entirely ceased. Under our system there is a remedy for all mere political evils in the sound sense and sober judgment of the people. Time is a great corrective. Political subjects which but a few years ago excited and exasperated the public mind have passed away and are now nearly forgotten. But this question of domestic slavery is of far graver importance than any mere political question, because should the agitation continue it may eventually endanger the personal safety of a large portion of our countrymen where the institution exists. In that event no form of government, however admirable in itself and however productive of material benefits, can compensate for the loss of peace and domestic security around the family altar. Let every Union-loving man, therefore, exert his best influence to suppress this agitation, which since the recent legislation of Congress is without any legitimate object. It is an evil omen of the times that men have undertaken to calculate the mere material value of the Union. Reasoned estimates have been presented of the pecuniary profits and local advantages which would result to different States and sections from its dissolution and of the comparative injuries which such an event would inflict on other States and sections. Even descending to this low and narrow view of the mighty question, all such calculations are at fault. The bare reference to a single consideration will be conclusive on this point. We at present enjoy a free trade throughout our extensive and expanding country such as the world has never witnessed. This trade is conducted on railroads and canals, on noble rivers



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and arms of the sea, which bind together the North and the South, the East and the West, of our Confederacy. Annihilate this trade, arrest its free progress by the geographical lines of jealous and hostile States, and you destroy the prosperity and onward march of the whole and every part and involve all in one common ruin. But such considerations, important as they are in themselves, sink into insignificance when we reflect on the terrific evils which would result from disunion to every portion of the Confederacy – to the North, not more than to the South, to the East not more than to the West. These I shall not attempt to portray, because I feel an humble confidence that the kind Providence which inspired our fathers with wisdom to frame the most perfect form of government and union ever devised by man will not suffer it to perish until it shall have been peacefully instrumental by its example in the extension of civil and religious liberty throughout the world. Next in importance to the maintenance of the Constitution and the Union is the duty of preserving the Government free from the taint or even the suspicion of corruption. Public virtue is the vital spirit of republics, and history proves that when this has decayed and the love of money has usurped its place, although the forms of free government may remain for a season, the substance has departed forever. Our present financial condition is without a parallel in history. No nation has ever before been embarrassed from too large a surplus in its treasury. This almost necessarily gives birth to extravagant legislation. It produces wild schemes of expenditure and begets a race of speculators and jobbers, whose ingenuity is exerted in contriving and promoting expedients to obtain public money. The purity of official agents, whether rightfully or wrongfully, is suspected, and the character of the government suffers in the estimation of the people. This is in itself a very great evil. The natural mode of relief from this embarrassment is to appropriate the surplus in the Treasury to great national objects for which a clear warrant can be found in the Constitution. Among these I might mention the extinguishment of the public debt, a reasonable increase of the Navy, which is at present inadequate to the protection of our vast tonnage afloat, now greater than that of any other nation, as well as to the defense of our extended seacoast. It is beyond all question the true principle that no more revenue ought to be collected from the people than the amount necessary to defray the expenses of a wise, economical, and efficient administration of the Government. To reach this point it was necessary to resort to a modification of the tariff, and this has, I trust, been accomplished in such a manner as to do as little injury as may have been practicable to our domestic manufactures, especially those necessary for the defense of the country. Any discrimination against a particular branch for the purpose of benefiting favored corporations, individuals, or interests would have been unjust to the rest of the community and inconsistent with that spirit of fairness and equality which



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ought to govern in the adjustment of a revenue tariff. But the squandering of the public money sinks into comparative insignificance as a temptation to corruption when compared with the squandering of the public lands. No nation in the tide of time has ever been blessed with so rich and noble an inheritance as we enjoy in the public lands. In administering this important trust, whilst it may be wise to grant portions of them for the improvement of the remainder, yet we should never forget that it is our cardinal policy to reserve these lands, as much as may be, for actual settlers, and this at moderate prices. We shall thus not only best promote the prosperity of the new States and Territories, by furnishing them a hardy and independent race of honest and industrious citizens, but shall secure homes for our children and our children's children, as well as for those exiles from foreign shores who may seek in this country to improve their condition and to enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty. Such emigrants have done much to promote the growth and prosperity of the country. They have proved faithful both in peace and in war. After becoming citizens they are entitled, under the Constitution and laws, to be placed on a perfect equality with native-born citizens, and in this character they should ever be kindly recognized. The Federal Constitution is a grant from the States to Congress of certain specific powers, and the question whether this grant should be liberally or strictly construed has more or less divided political parties from the beginning. Without entering into the argument, I desire to state at the commencement of my Administration that long experience and observation have convinced me that a strict construction of the powers of the Government is the only true, as well as the only safe, theory of the Constitution. Whenever in our past history doubtful powers have been exercised by Congress, these have never failed to produce injurious and unhappy consequences. Many such instances might be adduced if this were the proper occasion. Neither is it necessary for the public service to strain the language of the Constitution, because all the great and useful powers required for a successful administration of the Government, both in peace and in war, have been granted, either in express terms or by the plainest implication. Whilst deeply convinced of these truths, I yet consider it clear that under the war-making power Congress may appropriate money toward the construction of a military road when this is absolutely necessary for the defense of any State or Territory of the Union against foreign invasion. Under the Constitution Congress has power "to declare war," "to raise and support armies," "to provide and maintain a navy," and to call forth the militia to "repel invasions." Thus endowed, in an ample manner, with the war-making power, the corresponding duty is required that "the United States shall protect each of them [the States] against invasion." Now, how is it possible to afford this protection to California and our Pacific possessions except by means of a



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military road through the Territories of the United States, over which men and munitions of war may be speedily transported from the Atlantic States to meet and to repel the invader? In the event of a war with a naval power much stronger than our own we should then have no other available access to the Pacific Coast, because such a power would instantly close the route across the isthmus of Central America. It is impossible to conceive that whilst the Constitution has expressly required Congress to defend all the States it should yet deny to them, by any fair construction, the only possible means by which one of these States can be defended. Besides, the Government, ever since its origin, has been in the constant practice of constructing military roads. It might also be wise to consider whether the love for the Union which now animates our fellow-citizens on the Pacific Coast may not be impaired by our neglect or refusal to provide for them, in their remote and isolated condition, the only means by which the power of the States on this side of the Rocky Mountains can reach them in sufficient time to "protect" them "against invasion." I forbear for the present from expressing an opinion as to the wisest and most economical mode in which the Government can lend its aid in accomplishing this great and necessary work. I believe that many of the difficulties in the way, which now appear formidable, will in a great degree vanish as soon as the nearest and best route shall have been satisfactorily ascertained. It may be proper that on this occasion I should make some brief remarks in regard to our rights and duties as a member of the great family of nations. In our intercourse with them there are some plain principles, approved by our own experience, from which we should never depart. We ought to cultivate peace, commerce, and friendship with all nations, and this not merely as the best means of promoting our own material interests, but in a spirit of Christian benevolence toward our fellow-men, wherever their lot may be cast. Our diplomacy should be direct and frank, neither seeking to obtain more nor accepting less than is our due. We ought to cherish a sacred regard for the independence of all nations, and never attempt to interfere in the domestic concerns of any unless this shall be imperatively required by the great law of self-preservation. To avoid entangling alliances has been a maxim of our policy ever since the days of Washington, and its wisdom's no one will attempt to dispute. In short, we ought to do justice in a kindly spirit to all nations and require justice from them in return. It is our glory that whilst other nations have extended their dominions by the sword we have never acquired any territory except by fair purchase or, as in the case of Texas, by the voluntary determination of a brave, kindred, and independent people to blend their destinies with our own. Even our acquisitions from Mexico form no exception. Unwilling to take advantage of the fortune of war against a sister republic, we purchased these possessions under the treaty of peace for a sum which was considered at the time a fair

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equivalent. Our past history forbids that we shall in the future acquire territory unless this be sanctioned by the laws of justice and honor. Acting on this principle, no nation will have a right to interfere or to complain if in the progress of events we shall still further extend our possessions. Hitherto in all our acquisitions the people, under the protection of the American flag, have enjoyed civil and religious liberty, as well as equal and just laws, and have been contented, prosperous, and happy. Their trade with the rest of the world has rapidly increased, and thus every commercial nation has shared largely in their successful progress. I shall now proceed to take the oath prescribed by the Constitution, whilst humbly invoking the blessing of Divine Providence on this great people.



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Also, on March 4th, [John Brown](#)'s "To the Friends of Freedom" solicitation appeared in the New-York Daily Tribune:

New-York Daily Tribune

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 1857.

To the Friends of Freedom.

The undersigned, whose individual means were exceedingly limited when he first engaged in the struggle for Liberty in Kansas, being now still more destitute and no less anxious than in time past to continue his efforts to sustain that cause, is induced to make this earnest appeal to the friends of Freedom throughout the United States, in the firm belief that his call will not go unheeded. I ask all honest lovers of *Liberty and Human Rights, both male and female* to hold up my hands by contributions of pecuniary aid, either as counties, cities, towns, villages, societies, churches or individuals.

I will endeavor to make a judicious and faithful application of all such means as I may be supplied with. Contributors may be sent in drafts to W. H. D. Callender, Cashier State Bank, Hartford, Ct. It is my intention to visit as many places as I can during my stay in the States, provided I am first informed of the disposition of the inhabitants to aid me *in my efforts*, as well as to receive my visit. Information may be communicated to me (care of Massasoit House) at Springfield, Mass. Will editors of newspapers friendly to the cause kindly second the measure, and also give this some half dozen insertions? Will either gentlemen or ladies, or both, who love the cause, volunteer to take up the business? It is with *no little sacrifice of personal feeling* that I appear in this manner before the public.

JOHN BROWN.

New-York, March, 1857.

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[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR MARCH 4th]

April 6, Monday: A steamer frigate driven by a screw was commissioned in the US Navy, the [USS Niagara](#). This vessel would participate in the laying of the 1st transatlantic telephone cable, would interdict slave traffic in the Caribbean, would ferry diplomats to and from Japan, and during the civil war would blockade southern ports.

While [John Brown](#) was evading interception, he was able to take refuge in the [Boston](#) home of [Thomas Russell](#), barricading himself in his room with furniture in front of the door and coming downstairs only for meals. The fugitive abolitionist enjoyed shocking to [Mary Ellen "Nellie" Taylor Russell](#), averring that "I shall never be taken alive, you know, and I should hate to spoil your carpet" (there is no mention in this record of any concern as to how such a bloody struggle in the home might impact the psyches of this couple's little girls).



In 1857, when Brown was traveling in New England to raise funds for his war on slavery, he hid himself from U.S. marshals in the home of Judge Thomas Russell of Boston. Holed up, Brown nevertheless enjoyed the wide-eyed attention of Russell's twenty-three year old wife, Nellie, who was impressed by his stories, weapons, and prairie machismo.

Drawing from his boot a long and evil-looking knife and displaying a large pistol, he remarked "You haven't had this in your parlor before, have you?" During meals he gravely discoursed upon the various items with which he had needed to nourish himself on the Great Plains, such as the joints and toes of various creatures.

Before he left Boston, Brown would pay a final visit to the Russells, bringing a present for their younger daughter Mary Anne "Minnie" Russell and holding her. Mrs. Russell would report that he had said to their 2-year-old "Now, when you are a young lady and I am hanged, you can say that you stood on the hand of Old Brown."



April 6. P.M. — To New Bedford Library.

Mr. Ingraham, the librarian, says that he once saw frog-spawn in New Bedford the 4th of March. Take out Emmons's Report on the insects injurious to vegetation in New York. See a plate of the *Colias Philodice*, or common sulphur-yellow butterfly, male and female of different tinge. *Arcoda lanigera* is apparently the common yellow dor-bug. Arthur has *Tabanus*, the great horse-fly. Emmons says of *Scutelleridæ*: "The disagreeable smelling bugs that frequent berry bushes and strawberry vines belong here.... Of this family the genus *Pentatoma* is one of the most common and feeds upon the juice of plants. Sometimes it has only to pass over a fruit, to impart to it its offensive odor." The one represented looks like the huckleberry one.

EMMONS

NEW BEDFORD MA
ARTHUR RICKETSON
EBENEZER EMMONS



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NOT CIVIL WAR

April 30, Thursday: Founding of what would become San Jose State Teachers College and then San Jose State University.

A letter in solicitation was making the rounds in Boston:

Albany N.Y. 28.th April, 1857.

My Dear Sir :

The Worcester Gun factory cannot supply me with Revolvers in time; but the Map, Arms, Co; whose Revolvers I have used; & which are much the same as Colts) offer to let me have what I need being 200 for \$1300, thirteen hundred dollars.

He did not want the thing to be made public. More if Ben & Parker, & other good people of Boston, would make up that amount; I might at least be well served. Please write them my best wishes to yourself and family. Very Respectfully Your Friend
John Brown

JOHN BROWN
HARPERS FERRY

[Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed Lincoln and Concord woodlots for George Heywood. These lots had been in the Heywood family since the 1700s, and Cyrus Hubbard had surveyed some of them before Thoreau. Thoreau also surveyed a woodlot near Goose Pond near George Heywood and Wyman lots which became [Waldo Emerson](#)'s. Willard T. Farrar, who was the grandson of Amos Wright and probably lived at the corner of Sudbury Road and Corne Road,⁴⁸ paid \$2.⁷⁵ for the survey.



June 1, Monday: [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) issued a circular announcing a new school in [Concord](#). Leslie Perrin Wilson would report, of this school, that:

The faculty featured local talent – [Henry Thoreau](#), for example, who lectured and took the students for walks, and Elizabeth Ripley, who taught German. Sanborn's pupils included Edith, Ellen, and Edward Waldo Emerson, [Julian Hawthorne](#), Sam Hoar (son of Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar), the Mann boys [[Horace Mann, Jr.](#), George Combe Mann, and Benjamin Pickerman Mann], and two daughters of Captain [John Brown](#), on whose behalf the abolitionist Sanborn had raised money. Wilkie and Bob [[Henry James, Sr.](#)'s 3d son, Garth Wilkinson James, and 4th, Robertson James] were popular with their classmates. But after the academic year 1860-1861, neither wanted to return. Wilkie was

48. The Old Road To Nine Acre Corner.



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persuaded to do so, but Bob flatly refused. The Civil War provided an unaccustomed sense of purpose for the two younger James boys. It was an opportunity for them to act upon their commitment to the abolition of slavery and at the same time to break free from their father's influence. Wilkie enlisted in 1862, after his second year at Sanborn's school, Bob in 1863. Both served in black regiments – Wilkie in Colonel Robert Gould Shaw's Massachusetts Fifty-fourth, Bob in the Massachusetts Fifty-fifth. Civil War service turned out to be the high point in the life of each. (page 67)

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to John Langdon Sibley.

*Concord June 1st
1857 Dear Sir
I return to
the Library by Mr Frost
no^s 24, 25, & 26
of the Relations of
the Jesuits—
Yrs
Henry D. Thoreau*

Page 2
Librarian
of
Harvard University



June 1, 1857: P.M. –To Hill. A red-wing's [**Red-winged Blackbird**  *Agelaius phoeniceus*] nest, four eggs, low in a tuft of sedge in an open meadow. What [Champollion](#) can translate the hieroglyphics on these eggs? It is always writing of the same character, though much diversified. While the bird picks up the material and lays the egg, who determines the style of the marking? When you approach, away dashes the dark mother, betraying her nest, and then chatters her anxiety from a neighboring bush, where she is soon joined by the red-shouldered male, who comes scolding over your head, chattering and uttering a sharp *phe phee-e*.... I hear the note of a bobolink concealed in the top of an apple tree behind me. Though this bird's full strain is ordinarily somewhat trivial, this one appears to be meditating a strain as yet unheard in meadow or orchard. *Paulo majora canamus*. He is just touching the strings of his theorbo, his glassichord, his water organ, and one or two notes globe themselves and fall in liquid bubbles from his teeming throat. It is as if he touched his harp within a vase of liquid melody, and when he lifted it out, the notes fell like bubbles from the trembling strings. Methinks they are the most **liquidly** sweet and melodious sounds I ever heard. They are refreshing to my ear as the first distant tinkling and gurgling of a rill to a thirsty man. Oh, never advance farther in your art, never let us hear your full strain, sir. But away he launches, and the meadow is all bespattered with melody. His notes fall with the apple blossoms, in the orchard. The very divinest part of his strain dropping from his overflowing breast *singultim*, in globes of melody. It is a foretaste of such strains as never fell on mortal ears, to hear which we should rush to our doors and contribute all we possess and are. Or it seemed as if in that vase full of melody some notes sphered themselves, and from time to time bubbled up to the surface and were with difficulty repressed.



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WALDEN: Thus it seemed that this one hillside illustrated the principle of all the operations of Nature. The Maker of this earth but patented a leaf. What Champollion will decipher this hieroglyphic for us, that we may turn over a new leaf at last? This phenomenon is more exhilarating to me than the luxuriance and fertility of vineyards. True, it is somewhat excrementitious in its character, and there is no end to the heaps of liver lights and bowels, as if the globe were turned wrong side outward; but this suggests at least that Nature has some bowels, and there again is mother of humanity. This is the frost coming out of the ground; this is Spring. It precedes the green and flowery spring, as mythology precedes regular poetry. I know of nothing more purgative of winter fumes and indigestions. It convinces me that Earth is still in her swaddling clothes, and stretches forth baby fingers on every side. Fresh curls springs from the baldest brow. There is nothing inorganic. These foliaceous heaps lie along the bank like the slag of a furnace, showing that Nature is "in full blast" within. The earth is not a mere fragment of dead history, stratum upon stratum like the leaves of a book, to be studied by geologists and antiquaries chiefly, but living poetry like the leaves of a tree, which precede flowers and fruit, -not a fossil earth, but a living earth; compared with whose great central life all animal and vegetable life is merely parasitic. Its throes will heave our exuvia from their graves. You may melt your metals and cast them into the most beautiful moulds you can; they will never excite me like the forms which this molten earth flows out into. And not only it, but the institutions upon it, are plastic like clay in the hands of the potter.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

JEAN-FRANÇOIS CHAMPOLLION

GEOLOGY



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

June 26, Friday: The 2d day of the [Spiritualist](#) testing in Apartment Number 12 in the Albion building on Tremont Street in beautiful downtown Boston — and there were no better results than on the previous day.

In Springfield, [Illinois](#), [Abraham Lincoln](#) spoke against the Dred Scott decision.



This man had no rights that any white American was bound to respect. None at all. Nope.

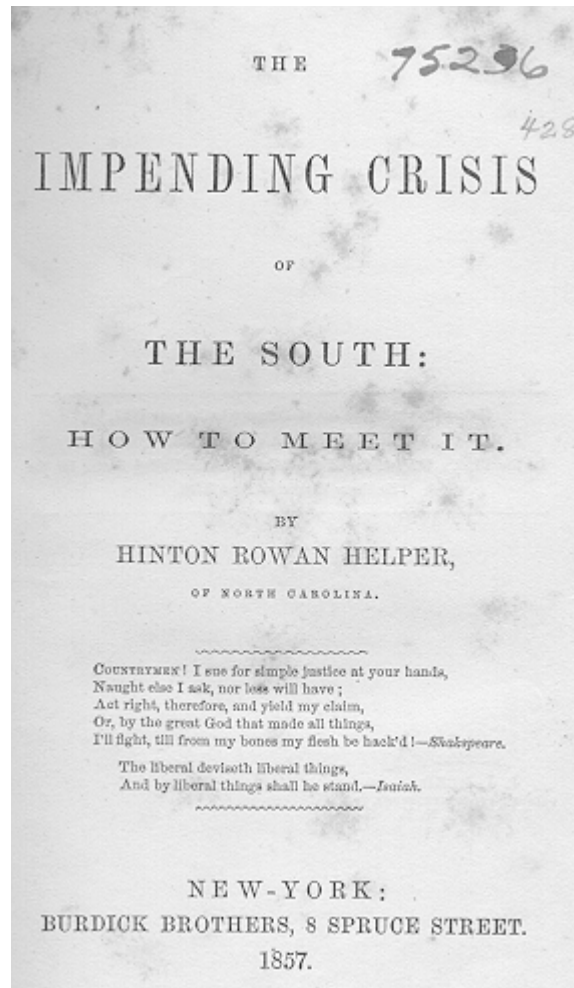
The 1st edition of [Hinton Rowan Helper](#)'s polemical compilation of census data THE IMPENDING CRISIS OF THE SOUTH: HOW TO MEET IT was published in [Baltimore](#), expanding upon what we now have come to regard as a pleasant conceit—the idea that oppression actually is unprofitable to the oppressor— and proclaiming also the pleasant conceit that [Waldo Emerson](#), who had originally espoused this idea in the 1844 “EMANCIPATION IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES”, was America’s “most practical and profound metaphysician.” Hoo boy! What Helper was proposing amounted to a comprehensive racial boycott by all whites against all persons of color. These coloreds couldn’t help but be unfair low-price low-quality competition for decent, honest, clean white



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workingmen such as him. He proposed a total ostracization of any white man so unaware of the needs of white people as to utilize the labor of a nonwhite. No union with slaveholders! It would become a crime to so much as possess a copy of this racist book in the American South.



There was a blurb by [Horace Greeley](#) in the [New-York Tribune](#) and [Weekly Tribune](#). When Senator [James Murray Mason](#) of Virginia read Helper's statistical study, he considered that its intent was "to array man against man in our own States." Helper's attitude was plain. He minced no words. He recommended to all white Americans that for fundamental economic reasons an abolitionist is your "best and only true" friend. I will quote *passim* in the manner in which it is customary to quote from such a treatise on attitude as *MEIN KAMPF*, in illustration of the plainness of Helper's message:⁴⁹



You must either be for us or against us.... [The white masses

49. Anyone who desires to evaluate the accuracy and representativeness of the constructed paragraph of quotation is urged to consult the original, which is a quick and entertaining read if one pays attention to the textual paragraphs while ignoring the enormous quantities of utterly irrelevant and tendentious and pretentious statistical tabulation.

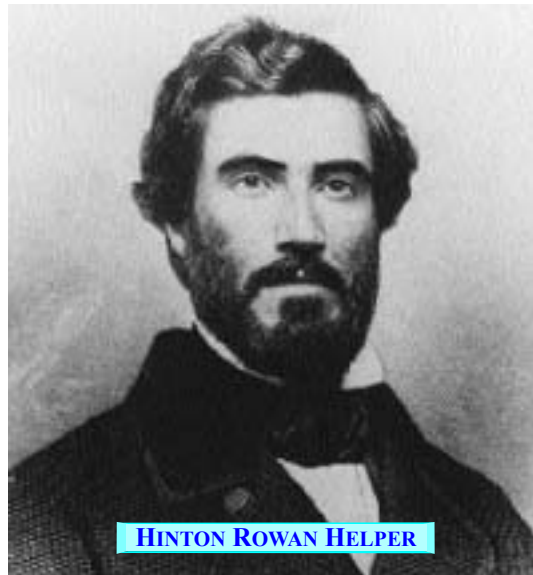


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are going to] have justice peaceably or by violence.... Do you aspire to become the victims of white nonslaveholding vengeance by day, and of barbarous massacre by the negroes at night?... [Slavery is] a perpetual license to murder.... In nine cases out of ten [slaves are] happy to cut their masters' throats.



HINTON ROWAN HELPER

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

This Emerson-admirer was an egregious case of what you would term an Antislavery Racist. —Which is to say, he was a Southern white man, from [North Carolina](#), who owned no slaves, whose fixation was that of the victim. It wasn't the blacks who were being harmed by slavery, it was real decent folks like him who were being harmed by [slavery](#). All these slaves, who belonged to other people, were impacting his life! He hated the nigger who was doing him wrong, He hated the slavemaster who was doing him wrong. What he needed most urgently was a lily-white, pure America of which he could be proud, where he could stand tall. Slavery was a tainted and archaic social system that was standing in the way of white people's cultural and material progress. Blacks were a tainted and inferior group who had no business being here in our brave New World in the first place.⁵⁰

The Democrats immediately attempted to neutralize Helper's dangerous racist abolitionism by issuing Gilbert J. Beebe's A REVIEW AND REFUTATION OF Hinton Rowan Helper's "IMPENDING CRISIS". They charged that their political opponents, the [Republicans](#), were using this treatise as their "text-book."

50. This interesting book has been republished in Cambridge MA in 1968. For more on this guy and his not-all-that-novel conceit that the victims were victimizing him and needed to be trumped, see Hugh C. Bailey's HINTON ROWAN HELPER: ABOLITIONIST-RACIST (University of Alabama, 1965).



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A crisis would break out in the discussions of this attitude about how to achieve progress, in December 1859 during the uproar over the [John Brown](#) raid on [Harpers Ferry](#) by abolitionists.

Speaking of progress, in this year in England, [Herbert Spencer](#)'s article "Progress: its Law and Cause" began to apply his one big idea, a principle that he had derived from K.E. von Baer, that the biological development of an organism proceeds from a homogeneous state to a heterogeneous state, to the solar system, to animal species, to human society, to industry, to art, to language, to science, and to the kitchen sink. This ideology-driven infatuation eventually led to his friend Thomas Henry Huxley commenting about him that Spencer's idea of a tragedy was "a deduction killed by a fact."

**ESSENCES ARE FUZZY, GENERIC, CONCEPTUAL;
ARISTOTLE WAS RIGHT WHEN HE INSISTED THAT ALL TRUTH IS
SPECIFIC AND PARTICULAR (AND WRONG WHEN HE CHARACTERIZED
TRUTH AS A GENERALIZATION).**

Late June: [John Brown](#) wrote to [Hugh Forbes](#) in [New-York](#), demanding that he either proceed forthwith to Mount Tabor, Iowa to train his troops, or return the \$600 he had been paid in advance on his \$100/month retainer.



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July 15, Wednesday: [John Brown](#) wrote a long autobiographical letter to [George Luther Stearns](#).⁵¹



[Governor Robert John Walker](#) declared Lawrence in the [Kansas Territory](#) to be in rebellion on account of its having established an illegal government.

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

August 8, Saturday: [John Brown](#) wrote from Tabor, Iowa, reporting to [George Luther Stearns](#) in Boston about the difficulties of his wagon journey toward the [Kansas Territory](#), about a lack of adequate contributions, and about a great many unexpected large expenses: “This has exceedingly mortified me. I could tell you much more had I room and time. Have not given up.”

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION



August 8, Saturday: Get home at 8.30 A.M.

I find that B.M. Watson sent me from Plymouth, July 20th, six glow-worms, of which two remain, the rest having escaped. He says they were found by his family on the evenings of the 18th and 19th of July. “They are very scarce, these being the only ones we have found as yet. They were mostly found on the way from the barn to James’s cottage, under the wild cherry trees on the right hand, in the grass where it was very dry, and at considerable distance from each other. We have had no rain for a month.”

Examining them by night, they are about three quarters of an inch long as they crawl. Looking down on one, it shows two bright dots near together on the head, and, along the body, nine transverse lines of light, succeeded by two more bright dots at the other extremity, wider apart than the first. There is also a bright dot on each side opposite the transverse lines. It is a greenish light, growing more green as the worm is brought into more light. A slumbering, glowing, *inward* light, as if shining for itself inward as much as outward. The other worm, which was at first curled up still and emitted a duller light, was one and one twentieth inches in length and also showed two dots of light only on the forward segment. When stretched out, as you look down on them, they have a square-edged look, like a row of buns joined together. Such is the ocular illusion. But whether stretched out or curled up, they look like some kind of rare and precious gem, so regularly marked, far more beautiful than a uniform mass of light would be.

Examining by day, I found the smallest to be seven eighths to one inch long, and the body about one sixth of an inch wide and from one thirteenth to one twelfth of an inch deep, convex above, pointed at head, broader at tail; head about one twentieth of an inch wide. Yet these worms were more nearly linear, or of a uniform breadth (being perhaps broadest at forward extremity), than the *Lampyre* represented in my French book, which is much the broadest behind and has also two rows of dots down the back. They have six light-brown legs within a quarter of an inch of the forward extremity. The worm is composed of twelve segments or overlapping scales, like the abdominal plates of a snake, and has a slight elastic projection (?) beneath at tail. It has also six short antennae-like projections from the head, the two outer on each side the longest, the two inner very short. The general color above was a pale brownish yellow or buff; the head small and dark brown; the antennae chestnut

51. This letter would be passed along to [Waldo Emerson](#) and many of its allegations and much of its phrasing would appear in a presentation delivered by him in Salem on January 6, 1860.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY



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and white; white or whitish on sides and beneath. You could see a faint dorsal line. They were so transparent that you could see the internal motions when looking down on them.

I kept them in a sod, supplying a fresh one each day. They were invariably found underneath it by day, next the floor, still and curled up in a ring, with the head within or covered by the tail. Were apt to be restless on being exposed to the light. One that got away in the yard was found again ten feet off and down cellar.

What kind are these?

In the account of the Glow-worm in Rees's Cyclopaedia it is said, "The head is small, flat, hard, and black, and sharp towards the mouth; it has short antennae, and six moderately long legs; the body is flat and is composed of twelve rings, whereas the body of the male consists only of five; it is of a dusky color, with a streak of white down the back."

[Knapp](#), in "Journal of a Naturalist," speaks of "the luminous caudal spot" of the *Lampyrus noctiluca*.⁵²

Speaking with Dr. Reynolds about the phosphorescence which I saw in Maine, etc., etc., he said that he had seen the will-o'-the-wisp, a small blue flame, like burning alcohol, a few inches in diameter, over a bog, which moved when the bog was shaken.

November: During this winter [John Brown](#) went east and met with [David Lee Child](#) and with [George Luther Stearns](#).



November: There was an [Underground Railroad](#) line, the "stations" of which were Salem in Southeastern Iowa, Tabor, Lewis, Des Moines, Grinnel, Iowa City, West Liberty, [Springdale](#) (a [Quaker](#) community outside Iowa City), Tipton, Dewitt, and Clinton. During the early winter [John Brown](#) hiked crosscountry from Tabor to Springdale with his group (Brown's son [Owen Brown](#), [John Edwin Cook](#), [John Henry Kagi](#), [William H. Leeman](#), [Charles Moffett](#), [Luke F. Parsons](#), [Richard Realf](#), [Richard Richardson](#), [Aaron D. Stevens](#), and [Charles Plummer Tidd](#), plus some runaway slaves). The trip required 25 days. A [Quaker](#) elder is reported to have said to [Brown](#), "Thou art welcome to tarry among us but we have no use for thy guns." [Friend John Hunt Painter](#), later the founder of Pasadena, California, was the only local [Quaker](#) we now know to have had knowledge of the violence of [Brown](#)'s plan. He said, "Friend, I can't give thee money to buy powder and lead but here's \$20 toward thy expenses."

THE QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONY

William and Delilah Maxson of North Liberty, a community about 3 miles to the northeast of Springdale, who were not Quakers, agreed to provide board for the group in their substantial home at the rate of \$1.50 per week per person, not including laundry or extra candles, and to take payment not in cash but in the wagons and teams the group had been using to transport rifles and pikes. William Maxson was aware of the violence of Brown's plan, but not being a Quaker, he had no objection. The Maxsons and the escaped slaves slept in the large cellar, and John Brown had a room on the main floor for the short intervals during which he was in town that winter, and the white men with him slept in the garret. Maria Todd, who would become the wife of Elza Maxson, also

52. Vide September 16th for an account of another kind. Vide January 15, 1858.



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slept in that cellar during that winter. The Maxsons and [Aaron D. Stevens](#) were spiritualists. A mock legislature was staged on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the big west room of the Maxson home until so many neighbors attended that they needed to convene at the community's brick schoolhouse. Parliamentary rules were enforced and the topics engaged with included war, partisan politics, human enslavement, political and civil rights for American blacks, college education and civil rights for women, banking laws, prohibitory liquor laws, mechanics, theology, natural philosophy, and, of course, spiritualism. During the winter the forenoons were spent in military studies and [Stevens](#), known as Colonel Whipple, led drills in which the men carried wooden swords and pikes and maneuvered on the front lawn. The evenings were given over to reading in books such as PLUTARCH'S LIVES, writing letters, and debating. [John Henry Kagi](#) offered instruction in shorthand. That winter, [Stevens](#) was a frequent visitor at the home of Moses Varney. His daughter Anna Varney Phelps would tell of sitting on Stephens' knee while, with tears rolling down his cheeks, he would sing in his beautiful tenor "Will they miss me at home, Mother? Will they miss me?"



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November: During the winter encampment of [Captain John Brown](#)'s forces in the Iowa Territory, [Charles Plummer Tidd](#) "ruined" a [Quaker](#) girl (something about which the local Quakers do not like to speak) and the other members of the team helped him sneak him away from [Springdale, Iowa](#) during the night.



THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

Nevertheless, the group was able to obtain some recruits not overly impressed with the [Peace Testimony](#) of Friend [George Fox](#) from among the residents of this town, such as the brothers [Barclay Coppoc](#) and [Edwin](#)

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[Coppoc.](#)



([Charles Plummer Tidd](#) would become one of the followers of “Shubel Morgan” who would return to the [Kansas Territory](#) in 1858 to raid into Missouri. He and [John Edwin Cook](#) would be particularly warm friends. He opposed the attack on [Harpers Ferry](#) but nevertheless would take part both in the raid on the planter Washington’s home and on the federal arsenal itself, escape, and make his way on foot toward the northwestern part of Pennsylvania. He and [Owen Brown](#) would find work and safety, under assumed names, on an oil well in the vicinity of Crawford County, Pennsylvania. He would visit Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and



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Canada and take part in the planning for the rescue of [Aaron D. Stevens](#) and [Albert Hazlett](#) while the Mason Commission of the Congress was presuming that he had been killed in the fighting at the ferry.)

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



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November 30, Monday-December 3: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed, for [Waldo Emerson](#), some woodlots at Goose Pond and [Walden Pond](#) belonging to John Richardson. His sketch showed the road leading from Lincoln to Concord Meeting (now Route 126) as it was in 1797 when the land of Duncan Ingraham, “one of the Squires of the village,” was sold to Richardson for \$533.⁵³ The land on the east side of that road had belonged to a farmer named Brister, and Thoreau wrote “Brister Lot, now the state’s because the owner, Brister, was a foreigner.”⁵³ The sketch pinpoints Emerson’s land between Richardson’s and John Potter’s along the “Road to Wayland,” the present Walden Street. Thoreau copied a second survey of Emerson’s land made in December 1848  by Cyrus Hubbard and, at the bottom, noted that in 1791 this land had belonged to William Savage.



View [Henry Thoreau](#)’s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:


http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/35a.htm



November 30, Monday: A still, warm, cloudy, rain-threatening day. Surveying the J. Richardson lot. The air is full of geese [**Canada Goose**  *Branta canadensis*]. I saw five flocks within an hour, about 10 A.M., containing from thirty to fifty each, and afterward two more flocks, making in all from two hundred and fifty to three hundred at least, all flying southeast over Goose and Walden Ponds. The former was apparently well named Goose Pond. You first hear a faint honking from one or two in the northeast and think there are but

53. Would this be the very land on which recently they tried to erect a humongous office building, until they were stopped by the collection of money at rock concerts? Goose Pond actually was two tiny ponds, one of which has now been filled in by the Concord Town Dump:

WALDEN: Goose Pond, of small extent, is on my way to Flint’s....

GOOSE POND



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a few wandering there, but, looking up, see forty or fifty coming on in a more or less broken harrow, wedging their way southwest. I suspect they honk more, at any rate they are more broken and alarmed, when passing over a village, and are seen falling into their ranks again, assuming the perfect harrow form. Hearing only one or two honking, even for the seventh time, you think there are but few till you see them. According to my calculation a thousand or fifteen hundred may have gone over Concord to-day. When they fly low and near, they look very black against the sky.⁵⁴

Northwest of Little Goose Pond, on the edge of Mrs. Bigelow's wood-lot, are several hornbeams (*Carpinus*). Looking into a cleft in one of them about three feet from the ground, which I thought might be the scar of a blazing, I found some broken kernels of corn, probably placed there by a crow or jay. This was about half a mile from a corn-field.

Just at the end of this November, in Lawrence in the [Kansas Territory](#), [Richard Realf](#), published poet and a correspondent for the [Illinois State Gazette](#), was being introduced to [John Brown](#). [John E. Cook](#), a member of Brown's sacred squad, would persuade this Englishman to sign up for their holy crusade.

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

December: [Richard Wagner](#) composed "Schmerzen" ("Sorrows") and "Träume – Studie zu Tristan und Isolde" ("Dreams"), the 2d and 3d of 5 poems by [Mathilde Wesendonck](#) he would set to music.

Late in the year [Captain John Brown](#) and his men came again to visit the farm homes of [Friend Edith Dean Painter](#) and [Friend John Hunt Painter](#) and of Friend Hannah Keislar Maxson and Friend William Maxson near [Springdale, Iowa](#):

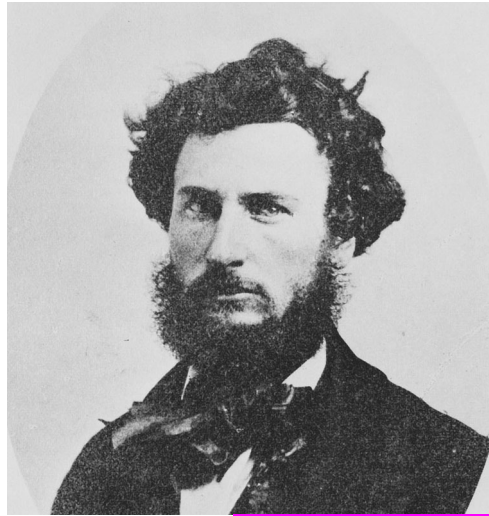


A little over a year after his first visit to the Springdale neighborhood, Brown reappeared late in December, 1857 – this time with some ten companions and for purposes which he seemed not anxious to have known. The men were lodged with a Quaker, William Maxon [or Maxson], about three miles northeast of the village of Springdale, Brown agreeing to give in exchange for their keep such of his teams or wagons as might seem just and fair. Brown himself was taken into the home of John H. Painter, about a half-mile away; and all were welcomed with that unfeigned hospitality for which the Friends have always been known.

54. I hear that one was killed by Lee in the Corner about this time.

1858

Through [George B. Gill](#) (back from whaling in the Pacific Ocean), [Stewart Taylor](#) became acquainted with [John Brown](#).



THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

During this year the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) wrote "Saints and Their Bodies," the 1st of his many essays for [The Atlantic Monthly](#). He wrote the 1st of his many nature essays, this one entitled "Water Lilies." He collaborated with [Lucy Stone](#) on the [Woman's Rights Almanac](#).



He met with [John Brown](#) and agreed to provide financial support for his cause.

Pages 476-7 of Henry Mayer's ALL ON FIRE: Brown spent the balance of the year [1858] recruiting soldiers, including an adventurer named Hugh Forbes who had fought with Garibaldi in Italy. With [Kansas](#) embroiled in political combat rather than open warfare, however, the captain brooded more and more upon the idea of "troubling Israel" with raids in the South and asked his eastern friends to help him raise money "for secret service, and no questions asked." At the end of January 1858, Brown came east



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to meld his black and white supporters into a revolutionary conspiracy. With magnetic fervor he sketched for Frederick Douglass the latest version of his plan to build a guerrilla strike force, and although Douglass had some tactical criticism, he agreed to help Brown raise some money and find recruits. From Douglass's house, Brown wrote manipulative letters to his best Boston prospects, making each out to be his more trustworthy friend, with news that he had "perfected arrangements for carrying out an important measure, in which the world has a deep interest," that lacked only money from people willing to give "practical shape" to their abolition theories. "Do you think any of my Garrisonian friends either at Boston, Worcester, or in any other place, can be induced to supply a little 'straw,' if I will absolutely make 'bricks'?" Brown asked [the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)]. While awaiting replies, Brown went on to Peterboro and persuaded his old patron [Gerrit Smith](#) to support the idea, which had now metamorphosed from a slave-running operation ("railroad business on a somewhat extended scale," he called it) into provocation of a full-fledged slave insurrection and establishment —under a constitution he had drafted at Douglass's— of a provisional mountain republic of liberated slaves and freedom fighters. There is absolutely no evidence that Parker or anyone else approached [William Lloyd Garrison](#) about Brown's latest scheme, but Sanborn, Higginson, Howe, and Stearns all manifested interest, and in the first week of March 1858, the mysterious "Nelson Hawkins" from somewhere in Iowa or perhaps Ohio registered at the American Hotel for a few days of conferences with his business associates. [Henry Mayer indicates that this material is a synthesis of material in Oswald Garrison Villard's JOHN BROWN 1800-1859: A BIOGRAPHY FIFTY YEARS AFTER (Boston, 1910), Stephen B. Oates's TO PURGE THIS LAND WITH BLOOD: A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN BROWN (NY, 1970), Franklin Benjamin Sanborn's LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN BROWN (Concord MA, 1885), and Edward J. Renehan, Jr.'s THE SECRET SIX: THE TRUE TALE OF THE MEN WHO CONSPIRED WITH JOHN BROWN (NY, 1995).]

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

[Lysander Spooner](#) spelled out in a broadside how the constitutional guarantee that citizens could bear and use arms, the "2d Amendment Remedy," might be exercised. This broadside was headlined on one side "A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery," to be read by northerners, and headlined on the other side "To the Non-Slaveholders of the South." Groups should form in the North to send arms to the South, and even fight in the South. Groups of southern blacks should "form themselves into bands, build forts in the forests, and there collect arms, stores, horses, everything that will enable them to sustain themselves, and carry on their warfare upon the Slaveholders." Such guerrilla forces or maroon forces could undermine white authority by capturing, stripping, and flogging individual slavemasters in the presence of their slaves. These forces, North as well as South, could finance themselves (in the manner in which Communist revolutionaries in Russia would sustain themselves during the early years of the 20th Century by robbing banks) by robbing the slavemasters.

The state of slavery is a state of war, in this case it is a just war, on the part of the negroes — a war for liberty, and



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recompense of injuries; and necessity justifies them in carrying it on by the only means their oppressors have left them. In war, the plunder of enemies is as legitimate as the killing of them; and stratagem is as legitimate as open force.



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[John Brown](#) would ask Spooner to cease distributing this pamphlet, pointing out to him that the effect would be to alert and alarm and forewarn the slavesmasters.

Democrats in Ohio gained control of the state legislature and repealed the personal liberty law that had been allowing fugitives to apply for a writ of habeas corpus. In the future, the runaway slaves who sought refuge around [Oberlin, Ohio](#) would become targets of slavecatchers from the South, who would be able to operate in Ohio under authority of the federal Fugitive Slave Act. A professor and his students at [Oberlin College](#), who rescued [John Price](#), an 18-year-old black fugitive [slave](#) who had escaped from owner John Bacon of Maysville,



[Kentucky](#) the previous winter by riding horseback over the frozen Ohio River, and made arrangements to send him to Canada, got into a certain amount of trouble. This group of rescuers who got themselves into trouble with the law included [John Mercer Langston](#), Ohio's 1st black lawyer. At the urging of President James



Buchanan, the government indicted 37 of them for violating the Fugitive Slave Law and put them on trial before US District Judge Hiram Willson. While the rescuers cooled their heels in the Cleveland jail, they were visited by [John Brown](#) — whose father Owen had been during the 1830s an Oberlin College trustee. Eventually, by negotiations between the federal government and the state government, all but two would be released, and during the following year those two, Simeon M. Bushnell, white, and Charles H. Langston, a free

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black, would be put on trial.



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

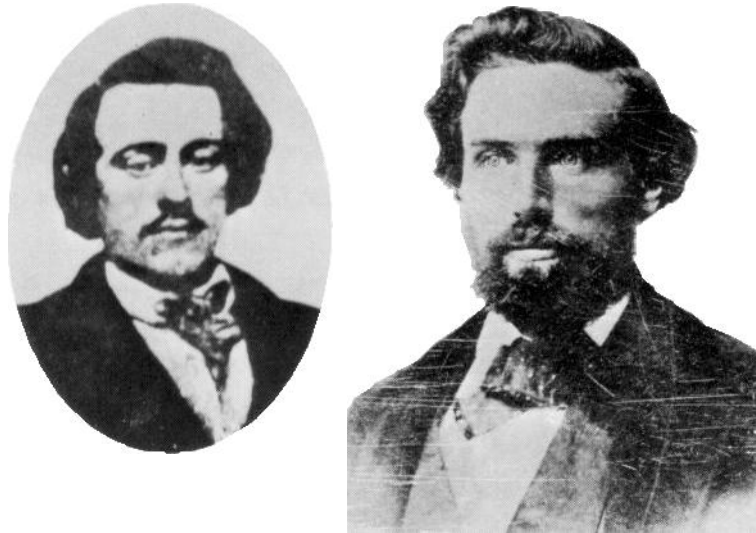
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Charles M. Gloucester was born to [Elizabeth A. Parkhill Gloucester](#) and [the Reverend James Newton Gloucester](#) (he would die during 1908).

[Charles Plummer Tidd](#) was one of the followers of “Shubel Morgan” who returned to the [Kansas Territory](#) to raid into Missouri. He and [John E. Cook](#) became particularly warm friends.



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(He would oppose the attack on [Harpers Ferry](#) but nevertheless would take part both in the raid on the planter Washington’s home and on the federal arsenal itself, escape, and make his way on foot toward the northwestern part of Pennsylvania. He and [John Brown](#)’s son [Owen Brown](#) would find work and safety, under assumed names, on an oil well in the vicinity of Crawford County, Pennsylvania. He would visit Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Canada and take part in the planning for the rescue of [Aaron D. Stevens](#) and [Albert Hazlett](#) while the Mason Commission of the Congress was presuming that he had been killed in the fighting at the arsenal.)



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During this year, in Beyer's ALBUM OF VIRGINIA: ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE OLD DOMINION, an illustration of [Harpers Ferry](#) as it appeared from Thomas Jefferson's rock was published:



DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



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January: [Sydney Howard Gay](#) left the [National Anti-Slavery Standard](#) to accept a position at the New-York [Tribune](#).



[Captain John Brown](#) traveled to Ohio to check on progress and was informed that [Hugh Forbes](#), who was not getting paid, had turned against him. Forbes was attempting to contact anyone he suspected was providing financial support for Brown (including some members of the Secret Six finance committee in Boston), to blackmail them that he would be obliged to expose Brown's plans unless he received his promised salary. Forbes would tattle to [Senator John Parker Hale of New Hampshire](#), [Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts](#), and [Senator William Henry Seward of New York](#), among others. Because of this, Brown would be forced to postpone the raid against the opposition of [the Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#), who was demanding that the raid proceed immediately. It was because of this threat of disclosure by Forbes that Brown would begin to use various aliases and, to disguise his appearance, would let his beard grow. As the raiders would wait in hiding in the loft of the Kennedy Farm in Maryland, to pass the time they would read and reread the material by Forbes that Brown had purchased, and copies of this literature would still be in the Kennedy farmhouse when it was searched in the aftermath.

[Captain Brown](#) and his band had ridden into Missouri and attacked two proslavery homesteads, confiscating property such as mules and wagons and liberating 10 or 11 of their slaves. The group would travel 82 days and covered over 1,000 miles while these slaves were being delivered to freedom in Canada. For only short intervals was [Captain Brown](#) himself at Hannah Keislar Maxson and William Maxson's home during the winter. It is said that before leaving his followers to raise money in the East, he disclosed to some of them his plans in more detail and for the first time, mentioning Harpers Ferry. In the community only William Maxson and [Friend John Hunt Painter](#) knew what was afoot. Brown would travel from [Springdale, Iowa](#) to [Chicago](#) by train and go east to raise more funds.

[John Brown](#) had spent the previous autumn and winter in [Springdale, Iowa](#) drilling his company of men. There was concern, of course, about the letters that Drill Instructor [Hugh Forbes](#) had posted during the early winter, so late in January [Brown](#) had come east to discuss the matter with his financial supporters.



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February: The governor of Texas, [Sam Houston](#), introduced a resolution proposing the establishment of a US protectorate over the “[so-called Republic of Mexico](#).”



The problem that he needed to solve was the problem of runaway [Texas](#) slaves obtaining refuge in [Mexico](#) (something that some of his own slaves had in fact succeeded in doing). To “provide for the reclamation of our slaves who escape into her territory,”⁵⁵ since the mongrel Mexicans were entirely incapable of maintaining a democracy or creating a “good neighborhood,” Mexico needed to be reduced to the status of a protectorate of the United States of America.⁵⁶ Restoring [human enslavement](#) in Mexico would, Sam pointed out benevolently, improve its ability to feed its citizenry.

After college [Edwin Morton](#) had become the tutor of Greene Smith, son of [Gerrit Smith](#) of Peterboro, New York. He would reside as the houseguest with that family for 4 years, becoming also the private secretary and protégé of the father. He was one of the persons of that household who would become cognizant of [Captain John Brown](#)’s plan for the forcible emancipation of the American slaves.⁵⁷ He wrote to his former classmate [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) from this upstate manor, to inform him of a letter Smith had recently received. Brown had written that he believed that he could accomplish considerably more with the money that had been entrusted to him, than had yet been accomplished: in fact he was hoping that he might be able to overthrow slavery in a large part of the nation. In order to maintain secrecy he was not himself going to visit the Smith home, nor would he visit his family in North Elba. Sanborn wrote to the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) that he had himself recently received 2 letters from Brown, hinting at this a new plan, one that could be executed in just 2 months. “I would not wonder if his plan contemplated an uprising of slaves, though he has not said so to me.”

55. Sam Houston. THE WRITINGS OF SAM HOUSTON, Volume VII. Ed. Amelia Williams and Eugene Barker. (Austin TX: U of Texas P, 1942), page 362.

56. Sam Houston. THE WRITINGS OF SAM HOUSTON, Volume VII. Ed. Amelia Williams and Eugene Barker. (Austin TX: U of Texas P, 1942), page 104.

57. [John Brown, Jr.](#) would reveal that he had met Edwin Morton “nearly every time” he had visited [Gerrit Smith](#)’s home, and that Morton was “to some extent” acquainted with his father’s plans and spoke “familiarly” on that topic.



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February 1, Monday: [Charlotte L. Forten](#) “Rec’d a letter and papers from Mr. N [[William Cooper Nell](#)] who is very kind ... Mr. P [George W. Putnam of Lynn] and I spent the morning in writing a Parody for Mr. N on the ‘Red, White and Blue.’”

[Waldo Emerson](#) checked out, from the Boston Athenæum, [Adam G. de Gurowski](#)’s AMERICA AND EUROPE (New York: D. Appleton, 1857). [Henry Thoreau](#) would make notes from this in his Indian Notebook #10.

AMERICA AND EUROPE

Using the name “Nelson Hawkins,” [John Brown](#) took refuge in [Frederick Douglass](#)’s spare bedroom in Rochester, [New York](#), paying board for some weeks at \$3.⁰⁰ per week. The two of them began to hatch plans

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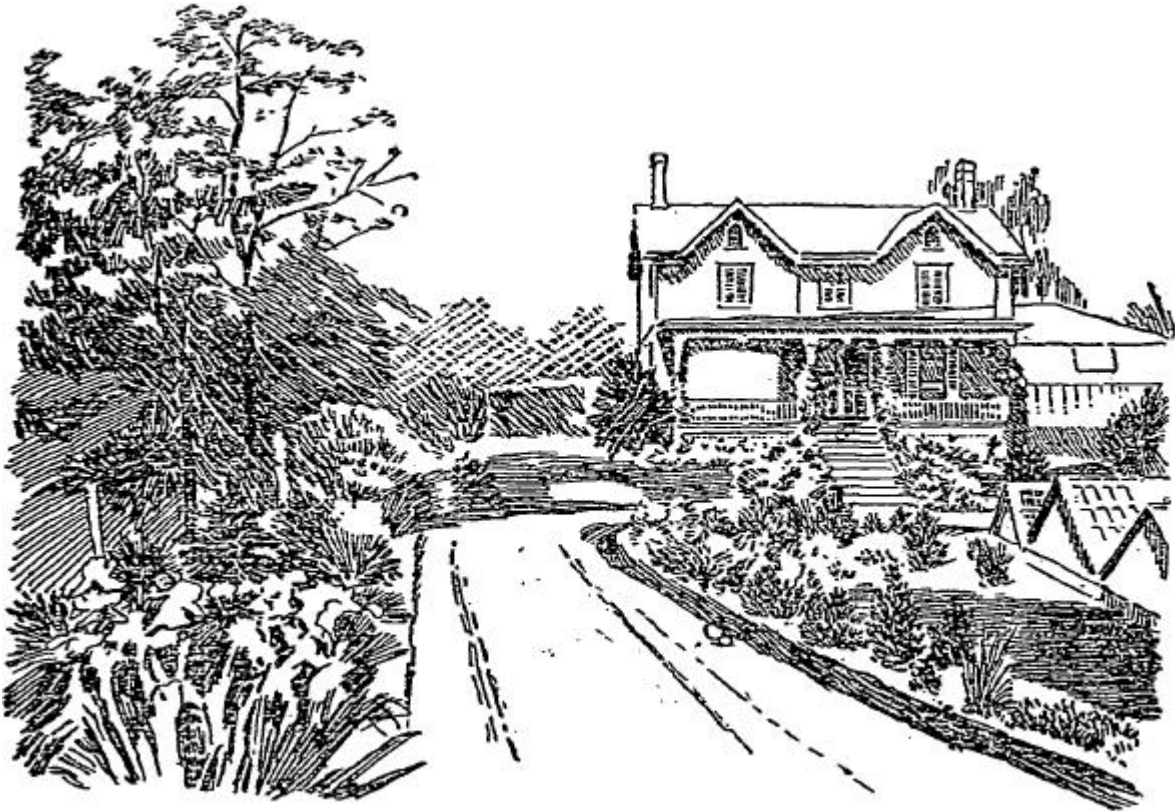
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for creating in the American South a [servile insurrection](#).



Frederick Douglass's Homestead, Rochester, N. Y.



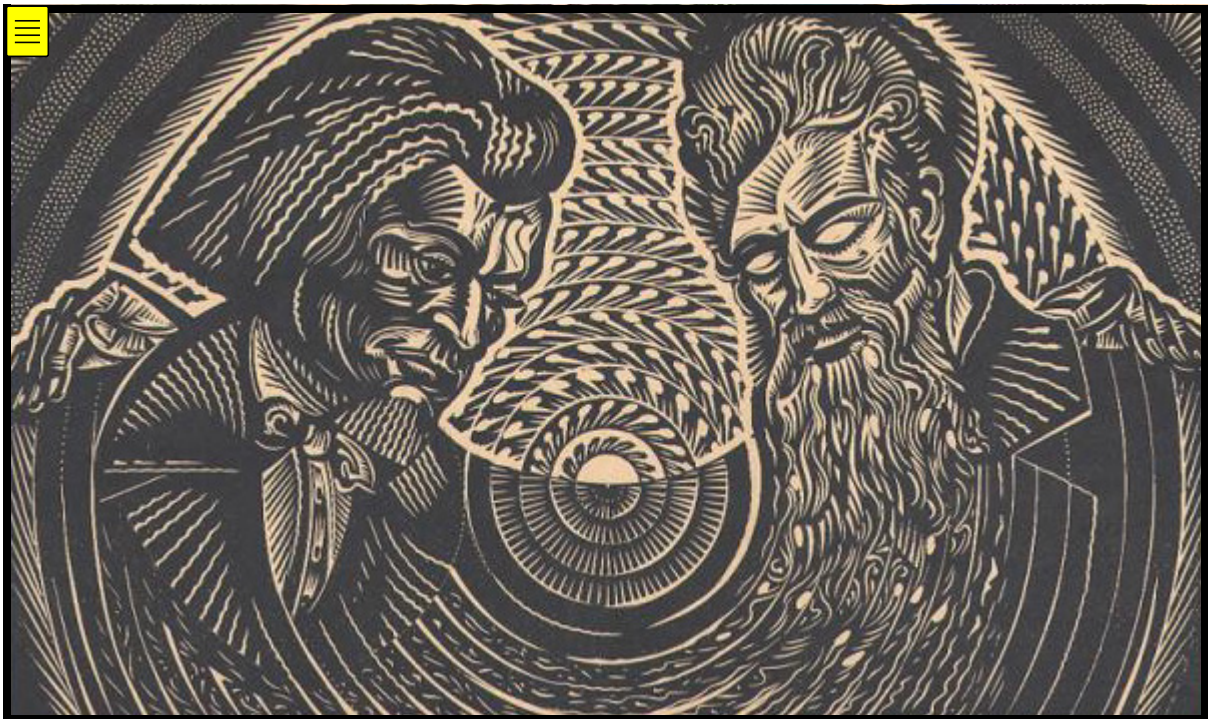
[Brown](#) would write from there to the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), to whom [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) had introduced him 13 months before, saying that he was again out of Kansas but was concealing his whereabouts. Do you not know, he asked, of some parties whom you could induce to give their abolition theories a

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thoroughly practical shape? Could any of his Garrisonian friends, either at Boston, Worcester, or any other place, he asked, be induced to supply a little straw, if I will absolutely make bricks? He mentioned having written [George Luther Stearns](#) of Medford, and Sanborn of Concord. But he was not sure, he wrote, how deeply-dyed those folks were as Abolitionists. Stressing the need for absolute secrecy, he wrote that he desired to bring his scheme about during the following 60 days. When the Reverend displayed this letter, Sanborn confirmed that he had indeed received one of like tenor, as had Stearns, as had the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#).



I have primarily concerned myself as a historian with the [servile insurrection](#) that the white man "[Captain](#)" [John Brown](#) (AKA "Nelson Hawkins") was attempting to instigate at the [Harpers Ferry](#) federal arsenal in 1859, a servile insurrection in regard to which he was expecting that he would be able to manipulate [Frederick Douglass](#) and [Harriet Tubman](#) into fronting for him. My contention will be that normal academic history writing is retrospective in nature, done in an awareness of actual outcomes and consumed by an audience driven by presentist concerns, and that as a result of this "ante-knowledge" (to coin a term), normal academic history writing presents an incomplete picture of the alternatives that had beforehand been available. Specifically, the fact that this Harpers Ferry situation resolved itself into a sectional [Civil War](#), and that what our academic historians now know about is this fratricidal sectional struggle that actually did come about, is causing them to overlook the raw fact that the situation might well have



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resolved itself instead into a racial genocide similar to the one that actually occurred in our northern coastlands in 1675/1676, known as "[King Phillip's War](#)" or might well have resolved itself instead into a class struggle similar to the one that almost occurred in the our coastal southlands in 1675/1676, known as "[Bacon's Rebellion](#)" –and that for many of the white Americans who had some advance knowledge of what John Brown was planning, such a racial genocide or such a class struggle would have been much to be preferred over our actual "civil war" brother-against-brother, white-on-white fratricide –this servile insurrection which Captain Brown was attempting to initiate, followed inevitably by a racial genocide, must have been a very acceptable outcome in their contemplation, an outcome that would have solved what they regarded as America's "negro problem" – resolved it once and for all.

America has had a series of race wars, first the war upon the [Pequot](#) tribe, then what is termed "[King Phillip's War](#)," then the attempt at servile insurrection by [Nat Turner](#) that was nipped in the bud in Virginia, then the attempt at servile insurrection by [Denmark Vesey](#) that was nipped in the bud in South Carolina, then the "Sioux Uprising" under [Little Crow](#) in Minnesota, then the "[Ghost Dancers](#)," etc. These struggles have always worked out very well for our white people, who always triumph in the end. So why are we so sure –given the unchallenged fact that the Secretary of War had been amply prewarned– that Captain Brown's plot was one that had been entirely unexpected by the US federal government, sprung as a surprise, a deep dark conspiracy?

It seems to me very plausible, given the number of people who had one or another piece of advance knowledge of what Brown was up to, that this thing actually came about not because it was unexpected and unwanted, but because it was very much expected and very much wanted.

(You know, and I know, that [President George W. Bush](#) was briefed beforehand on the likelihood that Osama bin Laden would strike somewhere somehow soon inside the United States of America, and you know and I know that "W" did nothing whatever with this information, just as [Secretary of War John Buchanan Floyd](#) in 1859 did nothing whatever with the information that John Brown was going to attack a federal arsenal in order to seize weapons in order to stage a servile insurrection. You know, and I know, also, that the [NeoCons](#) already had an office in the Pentagon, in which they were developing a laundry list of must-do items which they were going to spring on the citizenry the moment we were infuriated by an attack upon our nation – must-get-done items such as our seemed-like-a-good-idea-at-the-time invasion of Iraq. Of what relevance, therefore, is the conceit that the attack on the Twin Towers was a "sneak attack"? – Is this not of the same relevance as the conceit that John Brown's attack on Harpers Ferry was a "sneak attack"?)



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February 2, Tuesday: [John Brown](#) wrote to the [Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#):

Rochester NJ 2^d Feby 1858.

Rev. [T.W. Higginson](#)
Worcester

Messrs.

My Dear Sir

I am here concealing my whereabouts for good reasons (as I think) not however from any anxiety about my personal safety. I have been told that you are both a true man & a true abolitionist "& I partly believe" the whole story. Last Fall I undertook to raise from \$500 to \$1000 for secret service & succeeded in getting \$500. I now want to get for the perfecting of by far the most important undertaking of my whole life; \$500 to \$800, within the next sixty days. I have written Rev Theodore Parker, from George L Stearns & F B Sanborn Esqr, on the subject; but do not know if they are abolitionists. I suppose they are. Can you be induced to operate at Worcester & elsewhere during that time to raise from Antislavery men & women (or any other parties) some part of that amount? I wish to keep it entirely still about where I am; & will be greatly obliged if you will consider this communication strictly confidential; unless it may be such as you are sure will feel & act & keep very still. Please be so kind as to write N Hawkins on the subject Care of Wm L. Watkins, Esq. Rochester New York. Should be most happy to meet you again; & talk matters more freely. Hope this is my last effort in the begging line.

very Respectfully Your Friend
[John Brown](#)

February 12, Friday: [John Brown](#) wrote again to the [Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#):

Rochester NY. 12th Feby. 1858

Rev. [T W Higginson](#)
Worcester

Messr

My Dear Sir

I have just read your kind letter of the 8th inst; & will now say that Rail Road business on a somewhat extended scale; is the identical object for which I am trying to get means. I have been connected with that business as commonly conducted from my boyhood; & never let an opportunity slip. I have been operating to some purpose the past season; but I now have a measure on foot that I feel sure would awaken in you something more than a common interest; if you could understand it. I have just written my friends G L Hears & H B Sanborn asking them to meet me for consultation at [Gerrit Smiths](#), Peterborough. I am very anxious to have you come along; certain as I feel; that you will never regret having been one of the council. I would most gladly pay your expenses had I the means to share. Will you come on? Please write as before.

Your Friend [John Brown](#)



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February 19, Friday: Charlotte L. Forten wrote “Had a letter and some papers from Mr. N [[William Cooper Nell](#)].”

[The Reverend James Newton Gloucester](#) wrote to [Captain John Brown](#): “I wish you Godspeed in Your Glorious work.”

When Bernadette Soubirous went to the grotto she was accompanied by 6 or 7 women including her aunt. When three Hail Mary’s had been said, the vision of The Lady reappeared, and remained for about half an hour. This time Bernadette had brought a blessed candle, and she would continue to do this.

February 22, Monday: [John Brown](#) made contact with two black leaders, the Reverend [Jermain Wesley Loguen](#) of Syracuse, New York and Doctor J.N. Gloucester of New-York, for assistance in the recruitment of free black fighters for his scheme to make a raid into slave territory.



[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [James Russell Lowell](#).





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*Concord Feb. 22^d
1858*

My Dear Sir,

I think that I can send you a part of the story to which I referred within a fortnight. I am to read some of my latest Maine Wood experiences to my townsmen this week; and in this case I shall not hesitate to call names.

{One-fourth page missing}

[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) trusted that meeting with [Captain Brown](#) in Peterboro in upstate New York would reveal the actual threat level of [Hugh Forbes](#)'s letters, and therefore, when Stearns was unable to attend, Sanborn himself made the journey, arriving that evening. Brown and a few of his friends, such as [Edwin Morton](#), had already assembled. Morton sang [Franz Schubert](#)'s "Serenade" for those assembled, and Brown sang along softly with this, tears in his eyes. Then the whole outline of Brown's campaign in Virginia was laid before them "to the astonishment and almost the dismay of all present." The constitution which had been drawn up was exhibited, and a map indicating the territory they intended to capture, and Brown specified that he wanted to attack during the middle of May 1858. He needed only perhaps \$800, and \$1,000 would be more than ample. Plan A was a fortification in the Southern mountains and Plan B would be a retreat through the North.



But to strike at once at the existence of slavery, by an organized force, acting for years, if need be, on the dubious principles of guerrilla warfare, and exposed, perhaps, to the whole power of the country, was something they had never contemplated. That was the long-meditated plan of a poor, obscure, old man, uncertain at best of another ten years' lease of life, and yet calmly proposing an enterprise which, if successful, might require a whole generation to accomplish. His friends listened until late at night, proposing objections and raising difficulties, but nothing shook the purpose of the old Puritan. To every objection he had an answer; every difficulty had been foreseen and provided for; the great difficulty of all, the apparent hopelessness of undertaking anything so vast with such slender means, he met with the words of Scripture, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" and "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." To all suggestions of delay until a more favorable time, he would reply, "I am nearly sixty years old; I have desired to do this work for many years; if I do not begin soon, it will be too late for me." He had made nearly all his arrangements; he had so many hundred weapons, so many men enlisted, all that he wanted was the small sum of money. With that he would open his campaign with the spring, and he did not doubt that his enterprise would pay. But those who heard him, while they looked upon the success of Brown's undertaking as a great blessing and relief to the country, felt also that to fail, contending against such odds, might hazard for many years the cause of freedom and union. They had not yet fully



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attained the sublime faith of Brown when he said, "A few men in the right, and knowing they are right, can overturn a king. Twenty men in the Alleghanies could break slavery to pieces in two years."

February 23, Tuesday: In Peterboro in upstate New York, the discussion of the previous evening by the conspirators continued. The question became, very simply, whether they should turn [John Brown](#) over to the authorities, or cooperate. In the sunset the delegate went for a walk while Captain Brown engaged in a conversation about religion with another guest in the establishment, an elderly captain of Wellington's army. The comment was made, during this sunset walk, "You see how it is; our old friend has made up his mind to this course of action and cannot be turned from it. We cannot give him up to die alone; we must stand by him. I will raise so many hundred dollars for him; you must lay the case before your friends in Massachusetts and see if they will do the same. I see no other way." It had become clear that the old man was determined to tilt against this windmill whether they cooperated with him or not.

March 10, Wednesday: [Frederick Douglass](#), the Reverend [Henry Highland Garnet](#), [Stephen Smith](#), [William Lloyd Still](#), [John Brown, Jr.](#), and possibly some others, assembled in the dwelling either of Smith or Still in Philadelphia to confer with [Captain John Brown](#).



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Spring: [Edwin Coppoc](#) migrated to the [Kansas Territory](#) as a settler, but, since he had been raised as an adopted child in a nonresistant-abolitionist [Quaker](#) farm family, would take no part in the fighting there.



[Luke Fisher Parsons](#) went with [John Brown](#) to [Chatham, Canada](#) (after creating what they termed a “Provincial Constitution,” they would cross Lake Erie to Cleveland, Ohio where Brown trusted he would get financial help to carry on his plans to put down slavery; he would be disappointed in this and the project would be abandoned for a time. Parsons would visit his family home in Byron, Illinois and spend several months working in Gorton’s Carriage Shop at Kinsman, Ohio; then he would go gold adventuring during a Pikes Peak rush).

“Colonel” [Hugh Forbes](#), who after receiving \$600 as his initial 6-month salary had cooled his heels in Mount Tabor, Iowa for 3 months for the arrival of troops to train for [Captain John Brown](#), had begun writing letters to various influential people such as [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) and [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#) and members of the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee (whom he was referring to sarcastically as “humanitarians”), demanding to know why they were starving his wife and son and daughter in France. This loose cannon had definitely rolled from the asset category into the liability category.



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(It would be during a visit to [Springdale, Iowa](#) in Fall 1858 that he would meet [John Brown](#). He would surrender with Captain Brown in the engine house at [Harpers Ferry](#), and would be tried by a jury of his white male peers immediately after the conclusion of the trial of Captain Brown while his brother [Barclay Coppoc](#) was eluding capture. He would be sentenced to death on November 2, 1859. From prison before his hanging, he would write to his adoptive mother that he was

“sorry to say that I was ever induced to raise a gun.”

He would be hung with [John E. Cook](#) on December 16, 1859. The body would be buried in Winona after a funeral attended by the entire town. Later the body would be reburied in Salem, Ohio.)

April: [John Brown](#) returned to the Maxson home in North Liberty, Iowa near [Springdale](#) with funds and gave orders for the expedition to begin. By this point Moses Varney may have had some knowledge of what was about to take place. Each of the men of the God Squad wrote his name in pencil on the plaster wall of the “great room” of the Maxson house.

Friend Thomas James, speaking with Brown for the last time, warned him, “Thee must be careful or thee will get a rope around thy neck,” and Brown responded “Yes, I expect it.” According to one story, [Friend John Hunt Painter](#) said, “Friend, I can’t give thee money to buy powder and lead but here’s \$20 toward thy expenses.” According to another story, when Painter bought the expedition’s mules that they no longer needed, as a sort of contribution to the cause he paid an overly generous \$125 each. [Barclay Coppoc](#) was wanted by the authorities on suspicion of participating in the [Underground Railroad](#), and needed to get out of the area. When Painter took Coppoc through a furious blizzard 25 miles to Mechanicsville to catch a train for Chicago, Coppoc was wearing a false beard. Coppoc was deposited at the home of a black American who had collected funds from other negroes in the city for Coppoc’s flight (when the authorities arrived in Springdale with the proper papers and the sheriff, Coppoc was ahead of the curve).

When [Ellery Channing](#) returned to [Concord](#), [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) would report, he had his Main Street house quite to himself. Sanborn’s sister, his cousin Louisa, and he took rooms together at Charles Wetherbee’s. Wetherbee had skill in serving dinners, and we dined, 4 or 5 of us, with some luxury. Sanborn’s friend and former classmate [Edwin Morton](#) sang some college songs, inducing [Henry Thoreau](#) to hum along. Then [Thoreau](#) came forward, singing “Tom Bowline,” the only time Sanborn would ever hear [Thoreau](#) sing. Morton, a tactful musician, joked there seemed to be some deficiency but he could not make out whether it was in [Thoreau](#)’s voice, or in the tune.



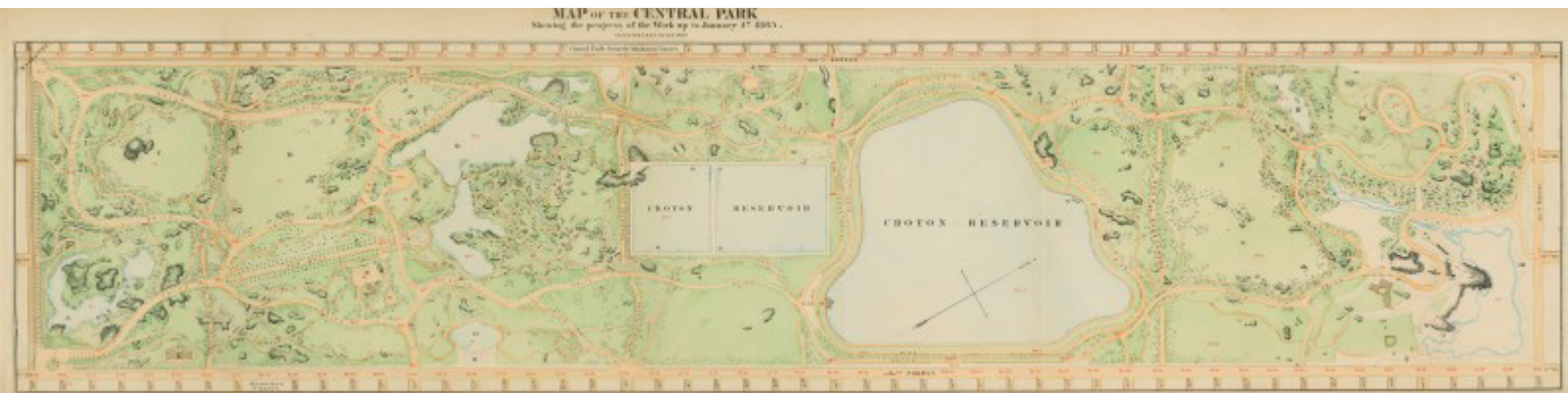


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April 28, Wednesday: [John Brown](#) was in [Chicago](#).

In a \$2,000 contest, the “Greensward” plan of [Frederick Law Olmsted](#), beating 32 other designs, was chosen for [New-York](#)’s new Central Park. Primarily, this plan won because its initiator was perceived as separate from the political system of that time and place, an outsider, a non-beneficiary of the process at hand. (The actual work of design would be done by another man, Calvert Vaux, who had training in architecture and who was neither so well, nor so poorly, connected.)



What had been on the approximately 770 acres of land at the time? The standard story, the story that the white people created and that the white people wanted to remember, was that it had been merely smelly swamp, weedy trees, and rocky outcroppings with an incredible coating of city filth. The skating pond that Vaux and Olmsted included in the plan would create a skating sensation, with 100,000 persons showing up of an afternoon.

Such skating was all the rage. In this same year, at [Toronto](#), the 1st ice-skating rink in [Canada](#) was opening for business. (Québec City boasts the 1st covered rink in Canada, with a large shed built over the natural ice to protect it from heavy snowfall.)



April 28. Blustering northwest wind and wintry aspect A.M.— Down river to look at willows.... I see the fish hawk [*Osprey Pandion haliaetus*] again.... As it flies low, directly over my head, I see that its body is white beneath, and the white on the forward side of the wings beneath, if extended across the breast, would form a regular crescent. Its wings do not form a regular curve in front, but an abrupt angle. They are loose and broad at tips. This bird goes fishing slowly down one side of the river and up again on the other, forty to sixty feet high, continually poising itself almost or quite stationary, with its head to the northwest wind and looking down, flapping its wings enough to keep its place, sometimes stationary for about a minute. It is not shy. This boisterous weather is the time to see it.

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May 2, Sunday: [John Brown](#) was in [Chatham](#), Ontario, Canada West.



He had just visited, or would soon visit, [Harriet Tubman](#) at her rented boarding house for escapees in [St. Catharines](#).



May 2: If I were to be a frog hawk [**Northern Harrier** ■ *Circus cyaneus*] for a month I should soon know some things about the frogs. How patiently they skim the meadows, occasionally alighting, and fluttering as if it were difficult ever to stand still on the ground. I have seen more of them than usual since I too have been looking for frogs.

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May 8, Saturday-10, Monday: In [Chatham](#), in the district now known as Ontario but then known as [Canada West](#), where there was a large population of former American slaves, [John Brown](#) announced to a secret “convention” of Negroes and whites he had organized, at the home of [Mary Ann Shadd Cary](#)’s brother Issac



Shadd, that he intended to establish a stronghold in the [Maryland](#) and Virginia mountains for the shelter of escaping slaves. This was referred to as the Subterranean Pass Way scheme.

[George J. Reynolds](#) had come up from Ohio to Brown’s assembly in the company of [James Henry Harris](#) and [Osborn Perry Anderson](#) (G.J. Reynolds would sign the document as “J.G. Reynolds,” an alteration that was not unusual due to his cautious nature).

A provisional constitution was adopted for the new government of the United States of America. The [Reverend William Charles Munroe](#) of the 2d Baptist Church of Detroit, [Dr. Martin Robison Delany](#), and several other influential black leaders were among those who voted their approval of this “Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the people of the United States,” the charter formal of the fugitive society to be created in the remote fastnesses of the Alleghenies. (Delany would in 1868  allege that he had known nothing of the plan for the raid on the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#), but others who had also been present at these meetings would mock such claims of ignorance.) Then it was decided that the flag for this new society would be the original flag used during the American Revolution, Captain Brown was voted to be commander

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in chief of this scheme, [John Henry Kagi](#) became his secretary of war, [George B. Gill](#) became his secretary of the treasury, and [Richard Realf](#) became his secretary of state. They had trouble finding a black leader willing



to assume the dicey role of President of this new society, so it was decided to replace the function of a president, temporarily, with a 15-person council headed by Commander-in-Chief Brown.

PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTION

PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTION

What follows is a list of the signatories to [Captain Brown](#)'s "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," from a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18, 1859. We do not know what subsequently happened to the original document in Brown's handwriting, but the list was transcribed and published as Record Group 46 among the documents of the Senate investigating committee in 1860. Also, a list of signatories and the Minutes of the Convention would be published in 1861 in Osborne Anderson's A VOICE FROM HARPERS FERRY:



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CHATHAM SIGNATORIES						
Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
George Akin (Aikens)	No	No	No	recruit		of color
George Akin (Aikens), eventually of the 102d US Colored Infantry that formed in Michigan by George DeBaptiste and included many men from Chatham , a musician						
Robinson Alexander (possibly)	No	No	No	recruit		of color
Robinson Alexander (possibly), eventually of the 102d US Colored Infantry that formed in Michigan by George DeBaptiste and included many men from Chatham (name transposed)						
Jeremiah Goldsmith Anderson	Yes	Yes		Captain or Lt.	26	white
<p>The maternal grandfather of Jeremiah Goldsmith Anderson, Colonel Jacob Westfall of Tygert Valley, Virginia, had been a soldier in the revolution and a slaveholder. Jeremiah had gone to school at Galesburg, Illinois and Kossuth, Iowa and had worked as a peddler, farmer, and sawmill laborer before settling a mile from Fort Bain on the Little Osage in Bourbon County in "Bleeding Kansas" during August 1857. He had twice been arrested by proslavery activists, and had been held for 10 weeks at Fort Scott. He then became a lieutenant of Captain Montgomery and was with him in the attack on Captain Anderson's troop of the 1st US Cavalry. He witnessed a murder, of a Mr. Denton, on his own doorstep by border ruffians. He went with John Brown on the slave raid into Missouri and remained with him thereafter. He was "J. Anderson" among the signatories to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," from a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18th, 1859. On July 5th, 1859 this 27-year-old had written of his determination to continue to fight for freedom: "Millions of fellow-beings require it of us; their cries for help go out to the universe daily and hourly. Whose duty is it to help them? Is it yours? Is it mine? It is every man's, but how few there are to help. But there are a few who dare to answer this call and dare to answer it in a manner that will make this land of liberty and equality shake to the centre." He was thrust through with a bayonet by one of the Marines, and pinned against the wall "vomiting gore." A white man, he was tortured because he was perceived by the attackers as a light mulatto: "One of the prisoners described Anderson as turning completely over against the wall [to which he was pinned by the bayonet] in his dying agony. He lived a short time, stretched on the brick walk without, where he was subjected to savage brutalities, being kicked in body and face, while one brute of an armed farmer spat a huge quid of tobacco from his vile jaws into the mouth of the dying man, which he first forced open." A local commented "Well, it takes you a hell of a long time to die." When opportunistic medical students would go to transport the remains to their college in Winchester, Virginia for dissection, their treatment of this corpse was so casual as to be recorded by a bystander: "In order to take him away handily they procured a barrel and tried to pack him into it. Head foremost, they rammed him in, but they could not bend his legs so as to get them into the barrel with the rest of the body. In their endeavor to accomplish this feat, they strained so hard that the man's bones or sinews fairly cracked." His remains were taken to the college along with the remains of Watson Brown (a corpse found on the banks of the Shenandoah River was more likely that of a local slave).</p>						



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CHATHAM SIGNATORIES						
Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
Osborn Perry Anderson	Yes	No	No	Private	29	of color
<p>Osborn Perry Anderson, “O.P. Anderson, or as we used to call him Chatham Anderson,” the only participant of color to survive Harpers Ferry and elude capture, had been born free on July 27, 1830 in West Fallowfield, Pennsylvania. He had learned the printing trade in Canada, where he had met John Brown in 1858. He was a member of Congress of John Brown’s Provisional Government in Chatham, Ontario in May 1858 and was “Osborn Anderson” on the list of signatories of the “Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States”; a member of the Vigilance Committee in Chatham and Windsor in September 1858. He would write later of the fight at Harpers Ferry and his escape in A VOICE FROM HARPER’S FERRY: “We were together eight days before [John Edwin Cook and Albert Hazlett were] captured, which was near Chambersburg, and the next night Meriam [Francis Jackson Meriam] left us and went to Shippensburg, and there took cars for Philadelphia. After that there were but three of us left [Brown’s son Owen Brown, Barclay Coppoc, and Charles Plummer Tidd], and we kept together, until we got to Centre County, Pennsylvania, where we bought a box and packed up all heavy luggage, such as rifles, blankets, etc., and after being together three or four weeks we separated....” Anderson, Coppoc, and Meriam had journeyed separately to safe exile in the area of St. Catharines, Canada. Anderson enlisted in the US Army in 1864, becoming a recruiter and/or noncommissioned officer for a unit as yet undetermined, and mustered out in Washington DC at the close of the war (he would be identified by his father Vincent Anderson in 1872 as having been a recruiter for the “western regiments”). He was a member of the Equal Rights League in 1865, and represented Michigan at the National Convention of Colored Men in 1869. He died a pauper of TB and lack of care in Washington on December 13, 1872.</p>						
M(atisen, or Madison) F. Bailey	No	No	No	recruit		of color
<p>M(atisen, or Madison) F. Bailey, a member of the African Commission of 1858 for emigration to the African continent, based on Martin M. Delany’s notion “the making of a colored nationality”</p>						
James M(adison) Bell	No	No	No	recruit		of color
<p>James M(adison) Bell, a member of the African Commission of 1858 for emigration to the African continent, based on Martin M. Delany’s notion “the making of a colored nationality”; a member of the Vigilance Committee in Chatham and Windsor in September 1858; California, 1865</p>						
John Brown	Yes	Multiple wounds	Yes	Commander		white
<p>John Brown, “Captain” John “Nelson Hawkins” “Shubel Morgan” “Isaac Smith” Brown.</p>						
Owen Brown	Yes	No	No	Captain	35	white



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NOT CIVIL WAR

CHATHAM SIGNATORIES						
Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>Owen Brown, 3d of John Brown's sons and his stalwart aid both in "Bleeding Kansas" and at Harper's Ferry, was born November 4, 1824 at Hudson, Ohio. With a withered arm, he had been attempting to make a career of writing humor articles for newspapers. His name was among the signatories to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," from a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18, 1859. He was 35 at the time of the Harpers Ferry raid. He escaped on foot toward the northwestern part of Pennsylvania. It was due largely to his psychological grit and his endurance that the little group of survivors of which he was the leader managed to make it out. He and Charles Plummer Tidd found work and safety under assumed names on an oil-well crew in Crawford County, Pennsylvania. He was the only one of the 5 escaped raiders not to participate in the civil war. He would never marry. He would grow grapes for some time in Ohio in association with 2 of his brothers, and then migrate west, and would be the final survivor of the raiders when he would die on January 9, 1891 at his mountain home "Brown's Peak" near Pasadena, California. A marble monument marked the mountain grave, until during July 2002 it mysteriously disappeared — since the grave was not a registered historical landmark, and not in a cemetery, there would be no investigation.</p>						
Thomas F. Cary	No	No	No	recruit		of color
<p>Thomas F. Cary, a member of the Vigilance Committee in Chatham and Windsor in September 1858, husband of Mary Ann Shadd, died in 1860</p>						
John Connel (Caunel)	No	No	No	recruit		of color
<p>John Connel (Caunel), private in Company A of the 113th US Colored Infantry that was formed from the 13th US Colored Infantry that was recruited in and spent its entire service in Arkansas</p>						
John E. Cook	Yes	No	Yes	Captain	29	white



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CHATHAM SIGNATORIES						
Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>John Edwin Cook, a well-connected 5'7" gentleman with blue eyes and long, curly blond hair, born during Summer 1830 to a well-to-do family in Haddam, Connecticut, had been a law clerk in Brooklyn and Manhattan after being expelled from Yale College on account of some student indiscretion, and had in 1855 become a member of the guerrilla force operated out of Lawrence in "Bleeding Kansas" by Charles Lenhart and had made himself an excellent shot. The name "John E. Cook" was among the signatories to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," from a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18th, 1859. He had been dispatched by John Brown to Harpers Ferry more than a year before the raid to work out the details on the ground and had secured employment as a lock tender on the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, as a schoolteacher, and as a bookseller. He had gotten married with a Chambersburg, Pennsylvania woman, Mary V. Kennedy, on April 18th, 1859. After being sent out by Captain Brown to collect weapons, and having escaped by climbing into a tree and watching the events transpire, and after having evaded capture for some months, against the advice of his comrades he became reckless in his search for food and was captured on October 25th, 8 miles from Chambersburg. As an incessant and compulsive communicator he had always been considered by the Brown operatives to be indiscreet. In a confession which would be published as a pamphlet at Charles Town in the middle of November 1859 for the benefit of Samuel C. Young, a man who had been crippled for life in the fighting, Cook would detail for his captors all his movements from the point of his 1st meeting with Brown after the battle of Black Jack in June 1856 until after his capture. At the last moment he would seek to save himself by representing that he had been deceived through false promises. For this revelation Cook would be severely censured at the time, being termed "Judas." Despite his confession, and despite his brother-in-law A.P. Willard being the governor of Indiana, he would in the end, one of the last, be also hanged for treason and murder at Harpers Ferry, on December 16th.</p>						
Martin Robison Delany	No	No	No	Supporter		of color
<p>Dr. Martin Robison Delany, Pennsylvania, 1843; attended the Colored National Convention of 1848; attended the Emigration Convention of 1854; a member of the Niger Valley Exploring Party in 1858; a member of the Vigilance Committee in Chatham and Windsor in September 1858. At a meeting of the conspirators in Chatham in Canada West in May 1858, "M.R. Delany," the Reverend William Charles Munroe of Detroit, and several other leaders of the large black expatriate community approved something termed the "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the people of the United States," as the charter for the pike-wielding fugitive society of raiders which was to be created in the remote fastness of the Allegheny Mountains by Captain John Brown subsequent to his raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. That document would be discovered on Brown's person when he was taken into custody. He would be a Major in the 104th Colored Infantry, and Sub-Assistant Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina, in 1865. He was a Freemason.</p>						
Stephen Ditten (Dutton), alias Chitman	No	No	No	recruit		of color
<p>Stephen Ditten (Dutton), alias Chitman, private in Company H of the 102d US Colored Infantry that was formed in Michigan by George DeBaptiste and included many men from Chatham</p>						



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CHATHAM SIGNATORIES						
Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
Alfred M. Ellsworth	No	No	No	recruit		of color
Alfred M. Ellsworth, Member of Congress from Illinois in 1853						
Simon Fisher (Fislin)	No	No	No	recruit		of color
Simon Fisher (Fislin), member of the 1st Regiment of US Colored Infantry						
George B. Gill						
<p>George B. Gill had come to "Bleeding Kansas" in 1857 after whaling in the Pacific Ocean, and had there been recruited by John Brown. His name was among the signatories to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," from a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18th, 1859. He alarmed other conspirators by conducting himself in such manner as to attract attention and arouse suspicion, for instance displaying weapons, bragging to lady friends that he had been in Kansas and had killed 5 men, informing other boarders at his lodgings that he was in town on a secret expedition with other fighters, who were under his command, etc. During the year before the raid, Captain Brown sent Gill to visit a black con artist named Mr. Reynolds who persuaded Gill that he had gone through the South organizing and had brought into existence in areas of the South a militant organization of black men and women. Pointing out to Gill that Southern newspapers carried numerous references to the death of a favorite slave, he alleged that these were leaders of servile insurrection plots who were being discovered and offed. According to this "mumper" Southern blacks were ready and needed only to be given a cue. There is evidence that several slaves from the vicinity of the arsenal did participate in the raid itself, but returned hastily to their plantations when it became obvious that the raid was a failure. Several fires were set in the vicinity of Harpers Ferry in the week after the raid, probably by slaves and free black Americans (Richard Hinton estimates that \$10,000,000 was lost in the sale of Virginia slaves in the year 1859; census figures show that between 1850 and 1860 there was almost a 10% decline in blacks in the three counties surrounding Harpers Ferry, a period during which the total number of blacks in Maryland and Virginia was increasing by about 4%).</p>						
Henry Harris	No	No	No	recruit		of color
Henry Harris, of Cleveland in 1859						
James Henry Harris						



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CHATHAM SIGNATORIES

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>No one associated with Captain John Brown, and no one associated with politics in North Carolina, has ever been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.</p> <p>“J.H. Harris” signed, as a member of a Vigilance Committee, on May 8th, 1858, the “Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States” in Chatham, Ontario West, Canada, a document which would be found on the person of John Brown when he was captured at Harpers Ferry on October 18th, 1859. Although another person of this name, James Henry Harris, had been born a slave in Granville County, North Carolina and had gained his freedom at the age of 18 in about 1848, he was not this “J.H. Harris.” Educated at Oberlin College, he would hold a teaching certificate from the New England Freedman’s Aid Society. He was of Cleveland in 1859, and a member of the 102d US Colored Infantry formed in Michigan by George DeBaptiste that included so many men from Chatham. He would attend the 1st Freedmen’s Convention in the South, held in what would become the St. Paul A.M.E. Church on Edenton Street in Raleigh during September 1865 as a representative of Wake County. He would become the 1st black alderman from Raleigh, and a delegate from Raleigh to the North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1868; he got married with Bettie Miller, a daughter of Addison J. Smith and Mary Anderson, a cousin of Osborn Perry Anderson; he died in 1891 in Washington DC and the remains are at Mount Hope Cemetery in Raleigh. There is yet a 3d James H. Harris, who was not this “J.H. Harris” signatory, who was belatedly awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and is interred in the remote section of Arlington National Cemetery that was reserved for colored soldiers, and for contrabands.</p>						
Thomas Hickerson	No	No	No	recruit		of color
Thomas Hickerson, corporal in Company D of the 13th US Colored Infantry						
Isaac Hobbar (Holler; Isaac Holden)	No	No	No	recruit		of color
Isaac Hobbar (Holler; Isaac Holden), probably a member of the 102d US Colored Infantry under the name Isaac Horden, that formed in Michigan by George DeBaptiste and included many men from Chatham						
S(quire) Hunton AKA Esquire Hunter	No	No	No	recruit		of color
S(quire) Hunton AKA Esquire Hunter, commissary sergeant of Company H in the 109th US Colored Infantry						
Job (or John) T. Jackson	No	No	No	recruit		of color
Job (or John) T. Jackson, Corporal in Company F of the 13th US Colored Infantry						
James Monroe Jones	No	No	No	recruit		of color
James Monroe Jones, Chatham resident, owned a gun shop						
John Henry Kagi	Yes	Yes		Secretary of War, adjutant	24	white





RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

CHATHAM SIGNATORIES

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
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Although [John Henry Kagi](#), AKA Maurice Maitland, AKA John Henrie, was largely self-taught, his letters to the New-York [Tribune](#), the New-York [Evening Post](#), and the [National Era](#) reveal him as the best educated of the raiders. A debater, public speaker, stenographer, wannabee writer, and total abstainer from alcohol, he was cold in manner and rough in appearance. A nonparticipant in organized religion, he was an able man of business. He had been born on March 15, 1835, a son of the blacksmith for Bristolville, Ohio in a family of [Swiss](#) descent (the name originally having been Kagy). During 1854/1855 he had taught school at Hawkinstown, Virginia but had indicated an objection to the system of slavery there and been compelled to return to Ohio with a pledge never to return. He had gone to Nebraska City in 1856 and been admitted to the bar. He then entered Kansas with one of General James H. Lane's parties and enlisted in [Aaron D. Stevens](#)'s ("Colonel Whipple's") 2d Kansas Militia. In fighting in the town of Tecumseh in "[Bleeding Kansas](#)" he proved himself by killing at least one man, who had been coming after him with a club. After being captured by US troops he had been imprisoned at Lecompton and at Tecumseh, but was finally released. On January 31, 1857 he had been struck on the head with a gold-headed cane by a slaveowning territorial judge, drew his revolver and shot the judge in the groin, but [Judge Physic Rush Elmore](#) got off 3 shots and one struck Kagi over the heart, the bullet being stopped by a memorandum-book. He was long with his family in Ohio recovering from these wounds, but then returned to Kansas and joined John Brown. He bore the title of Secretary of War in the provisional government and was next in command to John Brown; he was also the adjutant. His name was among the signatories to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," from a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at [Harpers Ferry](#) on October 18, 1859. When in Chambersburg as agent for the raiders, he boarded with Mrs. Mary Rittner. "In a very few days we shall commence," he wrote on the eve of the raid, "things could not be more cheerful and more certain of success than they are. We have worked hard and suffered much, but the hardest is down now, and a glorious success is in sight.... Be cheerful. Don't imagine dangers. All will be well." At [Harpers Ferry](#) he was trapped along with [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#) and [Lewis Sheridan Leary](#) in the armory called Hall's Rifle Works. When the 3 made a run for it, heading down to the Shenandoah River, they got caught in crossfire and [Kagi](#) was the first killed, shot in the head, his body being left to float in the river.

Thomas M. Kinnard	No	No	No	recruit		of color
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Thomas M. Kinnard, attended the Colored National Convention in Syracuse, New York of June 1855, organized by [Gerrit Smith](#), James McCune Smith, and [Frederick Douglass](#); member of the 19th US Colored Infantry; a Freemason

William Lambert	No	No	No	recruit		of color
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William Lambert, of Detroit, Michigan in 1843; member of the African Mysteries, a secret defense group in Michigan in 1858; Equal Rights League 1865; a Freemason; Convention delegate closely associated with George DeBaptiste

John Lawrence	No	No	No	recruit		of color
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John Lawrence, an officer of the Provisional Constitution; a member of Congress of John Brown's Provisional Government



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

CHATHAM SIGNATORIES						
Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
William H. Leeman	Yes	Yes		Captain	< 21	white
<p>William H. Leeman was of a wild disposition. Educated in the public schools of Saco and Hallowell, Maine, by the age of 14 he was working in a shoe factory in Haverhill, Massachusetts. He went to "Bleeding Kansas" with the 2d batch of recruits from Massachusetts, and on September 9, 1856 became a member of Captain John Brown's "Volunteer Regulars." He fought well at Osawatomie when but 17 years of age. At Springdale, Iowa, Owen Brown found him full of swagger and bluster and difficult to control George B. Gill said of him that he had "a good intellect with great ingenuity." He signed "W.H. Leeman" to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," per a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when the raiders were subdued at Harpers Ferry. By the raid upon Harpers Ferry he had reached the age of 20, the youngest of the raiders. He wrote his mother, "I shall be in danger, but it is natural to me. I shall not get killed. I am in a good cause, and I am not afraid." He made a mad dash out of the relative safety of the armory to attempt to escape by swimming down the Potomac River, where two militiamen caught up with him and shot him down on an islet. For hours his corpse would be used for target practice by drunken citizens, until their hail of bullets pushed the riddled remains into a current that drew it along until only his black hair could be glimpsed in the ripples on the surface. Mrs. Annie Brown Adams would write of him: "He was only a boy. He smoked a good deal and drank sometimes; but perhaps people would not think that so very wicked now. He was very handsome and very attractive."</p>						
Charles W. Moffett	Yes					white
<p>We believe that the name of Charles W. Moffett of Iowa was among the signatories to Chatham, Ontario's "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States" as "C.W. Moffit," per a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18, 1859. Perhaps this "W" stood for "Wesley," if we can rely upon a tombstone in the Maple Hill cemetery in Montour, Iowa ("Charles Wesley Moffett / Jun. 20, 1827-Aug. 19, 1904"). We wonder if perhaps he did not attend the raid on the federal arsenal because he got cold feet, or perhaps because he was one of a number of people suspected by the others of having written to alert Secretary of War John Buchanan Floyd to the plan for a raid on a federal arsenal (the Cabinet member received these warnings while at Red Sweet Springs in Virginia and neglected to alert anyone to be on the lookout for such an attack — he would remind people later that as War Secretary he had been getting a whole lot of spurious warnings).</p>						
William Charles Munroe (Munro)	No	No	No	recruit		of color
<p>William Charles Munroe (Munro), Michigan, 1843, President of the Chatham Convention, active underground railroad leader in Detroit; minister; a Freemason</p>						
Robert Newman	No	No	No	recruit		of color
<p>Robert Newman</p>						



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

CHATHAM SIGNATORIES						
Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
Luke F. Parsons						White
<p>Luke Fisher Parsons was a free-state fighter seasoned in "Bleeding Kansas." He took part in the battle of Black Jack near Baldwin City on June 2d, 1856, the battle of Osawatomie on August 30th, 1856, and the raid on Iowa during Winter 1857/1858. His name "L.F. Parsons" was among the signatories to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," per a document in John Brown's handwriting that would be captured when the raiders were subdued at Harpers Ferry. He had gone off toward a supposed Colorado gold rush and, summoned by letters from Brown and Kagi, did not manage to make it back to take part in the raid on the federal arsenal, or to attempt to rescue the prisoners once they were waiting to be hanged, at the jail in Charlestown, Virginia. He started a family and lived out a long life as a farmer in Salina, Kansas.</p>						
James Purnell	No	No	No	recruit		of color
<p>James Purnell, Ohio, 1850, 1851; a member of the African Commission of 1858 for emigration to the African continent, based on Martin M. Delany's notion "the making of a colored nationality"; Pennsylvania, 1865, nephew of William Whipper of the underground railroad</p>						
Richard Realf	No	No	No	assistant	23	White
<p>Richard Realf, English poet, was the son of a blacksmith who had become a rural constable. In 1852 he had published GUESSES AT THE BEAUTIFUL and in 1854, after giving up being the lover of George Gordon, Lord Byron's aging widow Lady Noell Byron, he had been led to the United States of America by "instincts" he characterized as "democratic and republican, or, at least, anti-monarchical." At the end of November or beginning of December 1857 he had been introduced to John Brown in Mount Tabor, Iowa by John Edwin Cook, whom he had met in Lawrence in "Bleeding Kansas" while working as a correspondent for the Illinois State Gazette. He traveled through Chicago and Detroit to Chatham, Ontario West, Canada and signed the "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," per a document in Brown's handwriting found when the survivors were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18th, 1859. By reading a book of ethical philosophy written by the President of Brown University, he determined that this violent agenda, and radical abolitionism in general, were a forbidden path, and so he returned to England to lecture, and visited France. He embarked at Le Havre on March 2d, 1859, arriving at New Orleans on April 17th, 1959 with the intention of becoming a Jesuit priest, then with an aim to join the Shakers, and made no further contact with Captain Brown. After the raid he would voluntarily testify before the US Senate Committee and then fight in the Civil War and then contemplate joining the Oneida Perfectionists and then attempt to become a Colonel of colored troops, before being laid low on account of his messy sexual life.</p>						
James Redpath						



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

CHATHAM SIGNATORIES						
Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
<p>James Redpath, crusading journalist out to make a buck in the best way. –Panderer in the pornography of armchair violence, at first in regard to the horrors of Southern slavery, –then in regard to the horrors of “Bleeding Kansas” –then in regard to the horrors of starving Ireland. Finally, after the Civil War, without fresh horrors to proffer to his armchair audience, he would resort to publishing defamatory doggerel poetry — lines in which he age-shames and fat-shames various Boston society ladies. –Never a dull moment for this “tell it like it is” dude! The Charleston, Virginia hangman sent him a piece of the scaffold, for which he devised a label: “A Bit of the True Cross, a Chip from the Scaffold of John Brown.”</p>						
George J. Reynolds						of color
<p>George J. Reynolds was a light mulatto with native American as well as black African heritage, a blacksmith or coppersmith, from Virginia although claiming to be from Vermont, aged about 35 at the time of the raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, and active in the Underground Railroad. He attended the Convention of Colored Men in 1858, and signed the “Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States” in Chatham, Ontario West, Canada per a document in John Brown’s handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued on October 18th, 1859, as “J.G. Reynolds” (3 weeks after signing on to this conspiracy he was disclosing some of Captain Brown’s agenda to a black secret paramilitary group at the Masonic Lodge of his home town, Sandusky, Ohio).</p>						
Richard Richardson	No					of color
<p>Richard Richardson, a fugitive slave from Lexington, Missouri who had joined John Brown in southern Iowa, was going through that unfortunate but now-well-understood initial period of reaction to freedom in which a former slave, accustomed to servitude and unaccustomed to self-origination, attaches himself to some authoritative white man who is able with courtesy to make use of him. He had been in 1858 a member of the African Mysteries, a secret defense group in Michigan, and signed the “Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States” in Chatham, per a document in Brown’s handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued on October 18th, 1859, but evidently because of a religious conversion and a dedication to missionary work in Canada did not get from Ontario to Harpers Ferry (of the 34 black signatories to the Chatham document, only Osborn Perry Anderson would be at Harpers Ferry). He became a private in Company E of the 113th US Colored Infantry formed from the 13th US Colored Infantry, that was recruited in Arkansas and provided Civil War post and garrison duty in Little Rock, Arkansas, mustering out on April 9th, 1866.</p>						
I(saac) D. Shadd	No	No	No	recruit		of color
<p>I(saac) D. Shadd, a member of the African Commission of 1858 for emigration to the African continent, based on Martin M. Delany’s notion “the making of a colored nationality”; a member of the Vigilance Committee in Chatham and Windsor in September 1858; Speaker of the House of Representatives of Mississippi in 1870/1871</p>						



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

CHATHAM SIGNATORIES						
Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
A(ddison) J. Smith	No	No	No	recruit		of color
A(ddison) J. Smith, husband of Osborn P. Anderson's cousin Mary Anderson; a member of the 28th US Colored Infantry formed in Indiana that was recruited by Mary Ann Shadd, James Henry Harris, and Willis Revels (1st cousin of Lewis Leary), whose chaplain was Garland White of Chatham (the 28th is of special interest due to the fact that more than half the men were recruited in Ellicott Mills, Maryland, near the location of Captain John Brown's farmhouse headquarters), or the 113th US Colored Infantry that was formed from the 13th US Colored Infantry that was recruited in and spent its entire service in Arkansas						
Charles Smith	No	No	No	recruit		of color
Charles Smith, a member of the 28th US Colored Infantry formed in Indiana that was recruited by Mary Ann Shadd, James Henry Harris, and Willis Revels (1st cousin of Lewis Leary), whose chaplain was Garland White of Chatham , or 109th, or 127th US Colored Infantry (all these included friends of John Brown and Osborne P. Anderson)						
James Smith	No	No	No	recruit		of color
James Smith, a member of the 113th US Colored Infantry that was formed from the 13th US Colored Infantry that was recruited in and spent its entire service in Arkansas						
Aaron Dwight Stevens	Yes	Badly wounded	Yes	Captain	28	white
<p>Aaron Dwight Stevens, John Brown's drillmaster, was of old Puritan stock, his great-grandfather having served as a captain during the Revolution. He had run away from home at the age of 16 to serve with a Massachusetts volunteer regiment during the Mexican War. Well over 6 feet, he made himself proficient with the sword. Enlisted in Company F of the 1st US Dragoons, he became their bugler, but at Taos, New Mexico during 1855 he received a sentence of death for "mutiny, engaging in a drunken riot, and assaulting Major George [Alexander Hamilton] Blake." This was commuted by President Franklin Pierce to 3 years hard labor but he escaped from Fort Leavenworth in 1856, 1st finding refuge with the Delaware tribe and then joining the Kansas Free State militia of James Lane under the name "Whipple." He became Colonel of the 2d Kansas Militia and met Brown on August 7th, 1856 at the Nebraska line when Lane's Army of the North marched into "Bleeding Kansas". He became a devoted follower. He was a spiritualist. At Harpers Ferry, when Brown sent this middleaged man out along with his son Watson Brown to negotiate under a flag of truce, he received 4 bullets but was taken alive. The never-married Stevens had a relationship of sorts with Rebecca B. Spring of the Eagleswood social experiment near Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and after his execution on March 16th would be buried there alongside Albert Hazlett. According to George B. Gill, writing after his death, "Stevens — how gloriously he sang! His was the noblest soul I ever knew. Though owing to his rash, hasty way, I often found occasion to quarrel with him more so than with any of the others, and though I liked [John Henry Kagi] better than any man I ever knew, our temperaments being adapted to each other, yet I can truly say that Stevens was the most noble man that I ever knew." He was not a 2d time reprieved by the President, and was hanged on March 16th, 1860.</p>						



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

CHATHAM SIGNATORIES						
Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
Thomas Stringer	No	No	No	recruit		of color
Thomas Stringer, represented Mississippi at the National Convention of Colored Men in 1869; a Freemason (he would organize "Negro Masonry" in Mississippi following the Civil War)						
Stewart Taylor	Yes	Yes		Private	23	white
<p>Stewart Taylor was born on October 29th, 1836 at Uxbridge in Canada. He became a wagonmaker and in 1853 went to Iowa, where in 1858 he became acquainted with Captain Brown through George B. Gill. He was a very good phonographer [stenographer], rapid and accurate. A spiritualist, he confidently predicted his own death. He signed the "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States" in Chatham, Ontario, Canada West per a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at Harpers Ferry on October 18, 1859. A relative, Jacob L. Taylor of Pine Orchard, Canada West, wrote to Richard J. Hinton on April 23d, 1860 that he had been "heart and soul in the anti-slavery cause." An excellent debater and very fond of studying history, he stayed at home in Canada during Winter 1858/1859 and then went to Chicago, thence to Bloomington, Illinois and thence to Harper's [sic] Ferry." While out of touch with the John Brown movement, the 23-year-old had feared being left behind: "I felt as though I was deprived of my chief object in life.... I believe that fate has decreed me for this undertaking.... It is my chief desire to add fuel to the fire." When mortally wounded in the engine house, begging to be put out of his misery, Brown instructed him "Die like a man." What remained of his corpse would be recovered in 1899 from a soggy group pit near the Shenandoah River above Harpers Ferry.</p>						
John A. Thomas	No	No	No	recruit		of color
John A. Thomas						
Charles Plummer Tidd	Yes	No	No	Captain	25	white



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

CHATHAM SIGNATORIES

Person's Name	On Raid?	Shot Dead?	Hanged?	His Function	Age	Race
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[Charles Plummer Tidd](#) was born in [Palermo, Maine](#) on January 1st, 1834 and had emigrated to "[Bleeding Kansas](#)" in 1856 with the party of Dr. Calvin Cutter of [Worcester](#) in search of excitement. After joining [John Brown](#)'s party at Mount Tabor, Iowa in 1857 he became one of the followers of "Shubel Morgan" who returned in 1858 to raid into Missouri. During the Winter 1857/1858 encampment of the Brown forces in [Springdale, Iowa](#), he "ruined" a [Quaker](#) girl and the other members of the team had to sneak him away during the night. Nevertheless, the group obtained some recruits not overly impressed with the Peace Testimony of George Fox from among the residents of this town, such as the brothers [Barclay Coppoc](#) and [Edwin Coppoc](#). He and [John E. Cook](#) were particularly warm friends. He signed, as "Charles P. Tidd," the "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States" in [Chatham](#), Canada per a document in Brown's handwriting that would be captured when he and his men were subdued at [Harpers Ferry](#) on October 18th, 1859. He opposed the attack on [Harpers Ferry](#) but nevertheless took part both in the raid on the planter Washington's home and on the federal arsenal itself, escaped, and made his way on foot toward the northwestern part of Pennsylvania. He and [John Brown](#)'s son [Owen Brown](#) would find work and safety, under assumed names, on an oil well in the vicinity of Crawford County, Pennsylvania. He visited Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Canada and took part in the planning for the rescue of [Aaron D. Stevens](#) and [Albert Hazlett](#) while the Mason Commission of the Congress was presuming that he had been killed in the fighting at Harpers Ferry. According to Mrs. Annie Brown Adams, "Tidd had not much education, but good common sense. After the raid he began to study, and tried to repair his deficiencies. He was by no means handsome. He had a quick temper, but was kind-hearted. His rages soon passed and then he tried all he could to repair damages. He was a fine singer and of strong family affections." On July 19th, 1861 he was able to enlist under the name "Charles Plummer" and would become a 1st Sergeant of the 21st Massachusetts Volunteers. On February 8th, 1862 he died of fever aboard the transport *Northerner* during the battle of Roanoke Island. (This was a battle he had particularly wished to take part in because ex-Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) of Virginia, the nemesis of the Harpers Ferry raiders, was in command of the Confederates.) [Tidd](#)'s, or [Charles Plummer](#)'s, grave is #40 in the National Cemetery in New Berne, [North Carolina](#).

THE QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONY

Robert Van Vruken	No	No	No	recruit		of color
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Robert Van Vruken (Van Ranken), a black community leader in Buxton, Ontario; interviewed by US Senate Committee (although of course they could not include the testimony of a black man in their official report)

Alfred Whipper	No	No	No	recruit		of color
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Alfred Whipper (often written "Whipple"), a member of the African Commission of 1858 for emigration to the African continent, based on Martin M. Delany's notion "the making of a colored nationality"

C. (Aaron Stevens) Whipple	No	No	No	recruit		white
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C. (Aaron Stevens) Whipple



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

May 14, Friday: [George Luther Stearns](#) of the Massachusetts Kansas Committee wrote from Boston to loose cannon [John Brown](#) in [Chatham](#), Ontario, Canada West, pointing out that the weapons the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee had entrusted to him had been intended specifically for the defense of the [Kansas Territory](#) and not for any other purpose (at this point the weapons were being hidden by an abolitionist associate of John Brown, Jr. in a furniture warehouse in Ashtabula County, Ohio beneath an inventory of ready-made coffins). A member of the committee was on his way “to confer with you as to the best mode of disposing of them.”

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

(Remember the Golden Rule, Captain: Those who have the gold make the rules.)



May 14. 5.30 A.M. — Up railroad.

Hear and see the red-eye on an oak. The tail is slightly forked and apparently three quarters of an inch beyond wings; all whitish beneath. Hear and see a redstart. Methinks I did also on the 10th? The rhythm a little way off is *ah, tche tche tche'-ar*.

10 A.M. — To Hill.

A kingbird. Saw a young robin dead. Saw the *Viola palmata*, early form, yesterday; how long? Look at White Avens Shore. See what I call vernal grass in bloom in many places.

The *Salix sericea*, large and small, and the *petiolaris* or loose-catkin (so far as I know their staminate flowers) are now out of bloom. The *rostrata* not quite done. Some of its catkins now three and a half inches long. The *alba* not quite done. *S. pedicellaris* by railroad about done, and the *Torreyana* done.

Picked up, floating, an *Emys picta*, hatched last year. It is an inch and one-twentieth long in the upper shell and agrees with Agassiz's description at that age. Agassiz says he could never obtain a specimen of the *insculpta* only one year old, it is so rarely met with, and young *Emydidae* are so aquatic. I have seen them frequently.

To-day, for the first time, it appears to me summerlike and a new season. There is a tender green on the meadows and just leafing trees. The blossoms of the cherry, peach, pear, etc., are conspicuous, and the air is suddenly full of fragrance. Houses are seen to stand amid blossoming fruit trees, and the air about them is full of fragrance and the music of birds.

As I go down the railroad at evening, I hear the incessant evening song of the bay-wing [**Vesper Sparrow**, **Pooecetes gramineus**] from far over the fields. It suggests pleasant associations. Are they not heard chiefly at this season?

The fruit of the early aspen is almost as large — its catkins — as those of the early willow. It will soon be ripe. The very common puffed-up yellow ovaries make quite a show, like some normal fruit; even quite pretty.

I discovered this morning that a large rock three feet in diameter was partially hollow, and broke into it at length with a stone in order to reach some large black crystals which I could partly see. I found that it had been the retreat of a squirrel, and it had left many nuts there. It had entered a small hole bristling with crystals, and there found a chamber or grotto a foot long at least, surrounded on all sides by crystals. They thus explore and carry their nuts into every crevice, even in the rocks.

Celandine by cemetery. One tells me he saw to-day the arum flower.

May 24, Monday: [Gerrit Smith](#) arrived at the Revere House on Hanover Street in Boston, then being used as a tavern offering private meeting rooms, to meet with his co-conspirators to figure out what to do about a [Hugh Forbes](#) character, at one time Captain Brown's principal lieutenant, who had evidently begun to contemplate possibilities of blackmail. To make Forbes's revelations of their scheming appear to be inventive, the group decided to postpone for a year their planned fomenting of [servile insurrection](#) in the state of Virginia. Beyond this, the group of conspirators decided that they had allowed themselves to become too intimate with the details of [John Brown](#)'s planning, and implemented a new “blind” arrangement to preserve deniability, by which their Captain was instructed not to “burden” them any longer with “knowledge” which could prove to be “both needless and inconvenient.”⁵⁸



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

June 3, Thursday: [John Brown](#) left Boston with \$500 in gold and with permission to retain the rifles he had in the [Kansas Territory](#).

At about this point in time, 3 weeks after the Chatham, Ontario convention, [George J. Reynolds](#) disclosed some information about the John Brown agenda in the assembly hall of a black secret military society in Sandusky, Ohio, an assembly hall in which they were maintaining “a fine collection of guns.”

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

[Henry Thoreau](#) for the 15th time (Dr. Bradley P. Dean has noticed) deployed in his journal a weather term that had been originated by [Luke Howard](#): “Yet I was surprised to observe that a long, straggling downy **cumulus** extending north and south a few miles east of us, when the sun was perhaps an hour high, cast its shadow along the base of the Peterboro Hills, and did not fall on the other side, as I should have expected.”



June 3. At length, by 3 o'clock, the signs of dawn appear, and soon -we hear the robin and the *Fringilla hyemalis*, -its prolonged jingle, -sitting on the top of a spruce, the chewink, and the wood thrush. Whether you have slept soundly or not, it is not easy to lie abed under these circumstances, and we rose at 3.30, in order to see the sun rise from the top and get our breakfast there. Concealing our blankets under a shelving rock near the camp, we set out.

It was still hazy, and we did not see the shadow of the mountain until it was comparatively short. We did not get the most distant views, as of the Green and White Mountains, while we were there. We carried up fuel for the last quarter of a mile. A *Fringilla hyemalis* seemed to be attracted by the smoke of our fire, and flew quite near to us. They are the prevailing bird of the summit, and perhaps are baited by the crumbs left by visitors. It was flitting about there, and it would sit and sing, on the top of a dwarf spruce, the strain I have often heard.

I saw just beneath the summit, and commencing some fifteen or twenty rods from it, dwarfish *Rhodora Canadensis*, not yet anywhere quite out, much later than in the valley, very common; lambkill; and checkerberry; in slightly boggy places, quite dwarfish specimens of *Eriophorum vaginatum*, quite common in similar localities all over the rocky part, six inches high or more. A little water andromeda with it, scarcer out, and Labrador tea., scarcely suggesting flowers. (This I observed only in two or three places on the northerly side.) A viburnum (probably *nudum* or a form of it) was quite common, just begun to leaf, and with *ne7nopauthes*, showing its *transparent* leaflets not yet expanded, a little behind the other, was quite sizable, especially the latter. These two, with the spruce, the largest shrubs at this height. In the little thickets made by these bushes, grew the two-leaved Solomon's-seal, not nearly out, and *Clintonia borealis*, not budded, though out in the valley. Within the folded leaves of the last, was considerable water, as within the leaves of the seaside goldenrod on the sands of the Cape. *Cornus Canadensis*, along the base of the rocks, not out. Diervilla. And, on the moist ground or in the small bogs, *Lycopodium annotinum*, resembling at first sight the *L. lucidulum*, but running, was very common in boggy places, sometimes forming quite conspicuous green patches.

Tile above plants of the mountain-top, except perhaps the mountain cranberry, extended downward over the whole top or rocky part of the mountain and were there mingled with a little *Polypodium vulgare*; a peculiar *Amelanchier Canadensis*, apparently variety *oligocarpa*, just begun to bloom, with few flowers, short roundish petals, and *finely serrate* leaves; red cherry, not out; *Populus tremuliformis*, not common and quite small; small willows, apparently *discolor*, etc., also *rostrata*, and maybe *humilis*; canoe birch and yellow birch, for the most part scrubby, largest in swampy places; meadow-sweet; *Lycopodium clavatum*; *Amelanchier Canadensis* var. *oblongifolia*, not quite out, a little of it; and also a little very dwarfish hemlock and white pine (two or three feet high); a little mayflower and *Chiogenes hispidula*.

58. As President [Richard Milhouse Nixon](#) would say, “Do I need to know about this?” Would this [Forbes](#) have been a relative of [John Murray Forbes](#)? Captain Brown's scheme, which he referred to as the “Subterranean Pass Way,” was that the escaped, armed slaves were to “swarm” into and set up a center of resistance in the Alleghenies from which they could liberate Virginia and then invade Tennessee and northern Alabama. Such a scoping of the situation never met with much respect from other of the other schemers. In particular Forbes, regarding blacks as inherently childlike, credulous, and cowardly, believed such a scheme to be doomed to failure from its inception. The scenario preferred by Forbes would have involved the herding of the slaves together by armed bands of white men and the driving of such herds of humans up the mountain chain toward Canada, neatly disposing of America's entire race problem by simple relocation of it to another nation (evidently the two planners had parted company over issues such as this).





RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

We concluded to explore the whole rocky part of the mountain in this wise, to saunter slowly about it, about the height and distance from the summit. of our camp, or say half a mile, more or less, first going north from the summit and returning by the western semicircle, and then exploring the east side, completing the circle, and return over the summit at night.

To sum up, these were the *Plants of the Summit*, i.e. within a dozen rods of it: *Potentilla tridentata* (and lower); *Vaccinium Vitis-Idæa*; fine grass [Was it not *Juncus trifidus* of August, 1860?]; sericocarpus-like radical leaves [Was it not *Solidago thyrsoides* of August, 1860?]; *Arenaria Grænlandica*; dwarf black spruce; a little dry moss; the two kinds of cladonia, white and green, and the small leather-colored lichen of rocks [*U. erosa* (?) or *hyperborea* (?). *Vide* Sept. 21, 1858, and a specimen from Lafayette. *Vide* specimen of August, 1860.], mingled with the larger *Umbilicaria pustulata*. All these but the *V. Vitis-Idæa* generally dispersed over the rocky part [The *Vaccinium Vitis-Idæa* also in patches lower down. *Vide* August, 1860.].

Within fifteen or twenty rods of it, or scarcely, if at all, lower than the last: Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum and perhaps the variety angustifolium; Pyrus arbutifolia; mountain-ash. Generally distributed.

Commencing fifteen or twenty rods below it: Rhodora; lambkill; checkerberry; Eriophorum vaginatum; water andromeda; Labrador tea; Viburnum, (nudum,?); nemophanes; two-leaved Solomon's-seal; clintonia; Cornus Canadensis; Lycopodium annotinum; diervilla.

Generally lower than the above, in the rest of the bare rocky part, with all of the above: Ribes prostratum; Polypodium vulgare; Amelanchier Canadensis var. oligocarpa red cherry; Populus tremuliformis; Salix apparently discolor, perhaps also humilis, certainly rostrata.; meadow-sweet; canoe birch; yellow birch; Lycopodium clavatum; Amelanchier oblongifolia; a little red elder; hemlock; white pine; mayflower; chiogenes. [Saw the raspberry in '52 and '60.]

Did not examine particularly the larger growth of the swamps, but think it was chiefly spruce, white and yellow birch, mountain-ash, etc.

The *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum* and the *Abies nigra* are among the most prevailing conspicuous plants.

We first descended somewhat toward the north this forenoon, then turned west over a ridge lay which some ascend front the north. There: are several large ponds not far from the mountain on the north, and I thought there was less forest to be seen on this sick than on the south. We crossed chic or two now dry watercourses, there, however, judging from the collections of rubbish or drift, much water must have flown at some other season.

[Jackson](#) in his map in the Report on the Geology of Massachusetts calls this mountain "mica slate and porphyritic granite," and [says] that the rocks on the summit are "a hard variety of gneiss filled with small crystals of garnets."

We observed that the rocks were remarkably smoothed, almost polished and rounded, and also scratched. The scratches run from about north-northwest to south-southeast. The sides of the rocks often straight, upright walls, several rods long; from north to south and five to ten feet high, with a very smooth, rounded edge. There were many of these long, straight, rounded walls of rock, especially on the northwest and west. Some smaller or lower ones were so rounded and smooth as to resemble at a little distance long-fallen trunks of trees. The rocks were, indeed, singularly worn on a great scale. Often a vertical cross-section would show some such profile as this:



as if they had been grooved with a tool of a corresponding edge. There were occasionally conspicuous masses and also veins of white quartz, and very common were bright-purple or wine-colored garnets imbedded in the rock, looking like berries in a pudding'. In many parts, as on the southeast plateau especially, the rocks were regularly stratified, and split into regular horizontal slabs about a foot in thickness, projecting one beyond another like steps.

The little bogs or mosses, sometimes only a rod inn diameter, are a similar feature. Ordinarily the cladonia and other lichens are crackling under your feet, when suddenly you step into a miniature bog filling the space between two rocks and you are at a loss to tell where the moisture comes from. The amount of it seems to be that some spongy moss is enabled to grow there and retain sonic of the clouds which rest on it. Moisture and aridity are singularly near neighbors to each other up there. The surface is made up of masses of rock more or less smoothed and rounded, or else jagged, and the little soil between is a coarse, gravelly kind, the ruins of the rocks and the decayed vegetation that has grown there. You step unexpectedly from Arabia Pretax, where the dry lichens crackle under your feet, into a miniature bog, say Dismal Swamp, where you suddenly sink a foot in wet moss, and the next step carries you into Arabia Petraea again. In more extensive swamps I slumped through moss to water sometimes, though the bottom was of rock, while a fire would rapidly spread in the and lichens around. Perhaps the mosses grow, in the wettest season chiefly, and so are enabled to retain some moisture through the driest. Plants of the bogs and of the rocks grow close to each other. You are surprised to



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see a great many plants of bogs growing close to the most barren and driest spots, where only cladonias cover the rocks. Often your first notice of a bog in the midst of the arid waste, where the lichens crackle under your feet, is your slumping a foot into wet moss. Methinks there cannot be so much evaporation going on up there, - witness the water in the clintonia leaves, as in the solidago by the sandy seashore, and this (which is owing to the coolness), rather than the prevalence of mist, may account for the presence of this moisture forming bogs. In a shallow rain-water pool, or rock cistern, about three rods long by one or one and a half wide, several hundred feet below the summit, on the west side, but still on the bare rocky top and on the steepest side of the summit, I saw toad-spawn (black with white bellies), also some very large spawn new to me. There were four or five masses of it, each three or four inches in diameter and of a peculiar light misty bluish white as it lay in the water near the surface, attached to some weed or stick, as usual. Each mass consisted of but few large ova, more than a quarter of an inch in diameter, in which were pale-brown tadpoles flattened out. The outside of the mass when taken up was found to consist of large spherical or rounded gelatinous projections three quarters of an inch wide, and blue in the light and air, while the ova within were greenish. This rain-water pool was generally less than a foot deep, with scarcely a weed in it, but considerable mud concealing its rocky bottom. The spawn was unusually clean and clear. I suspect it to be that of bullfrogs, [Probably *Rana jontinalis*. Vide August, 1860.] though not a frog was to be seen; they were probably lurking beneath the rocks in the water at that hour. This pool was bounded on one or two sides by those rounded walls of rock five or six feet high. My companion had said that he heard a bullfrog the evening before. Is it likely that these toads and frogs ever hopped up there? The hylodes peeped regularly toward night each day in a similar pool much nearer the summit. Agassiz might say that they originated on the top. Perhaps they fell from the clouds in tire form of spawn or tadpoles or young frogs. I think it more likely that they fell down than that they hopped up. Yet how can they escape the frosts of winter? The mud is hardly deep enough to protect them.

Having reached the neighborhood of our camp again arid explored the wooded portion lower down along the path up the mountain, we set out northeast along the east side of the mountain. The southeast part of the mountain-top is an extended broad rocky *almost* plateau, consisting of large flat rocks with small bogs and rain-water pools and easy ascents to different levels. The black spruce tree which is scattered here and there over it, the prevailing tree or shrub of the mountaintop, evidently has many difficulties to contend with. It is generally of a yellowish green, its foliage. The most exposed trees are very stout arid spreading close to the rock, often much wider close to the rock than they are high, and these lower, almost their only, limbs completely filling and covering openings between the rocks. I saw one which grew out of a narrow crack in the rock, which was three feet high, five inches in diameter at the ground, arid six feet wide on the rock. It was shaped like a bodkin, - the main stem. The spruce commonly grows in clefts of the rocks; has many large limbs, and longer than the tree is high, perhaps, spreading close and low over the rock in every direction, sometimes eight or ten within a foot of the rock; then, higher up the stem, or midway for three or six feet, though perfectly perpendicular, is quite bare on the north side and commonly showing no trace of a limb, no stubs, but the limbs at this height all ray out southward, and the top is crowned with a tuft of tender twigs. This proves the violence of the storms which they have to contend with. Its branches love to run along flat on the rocks, filling the openings between the rocks. It forms dense coverts and forms, apparently, for the rabbits, etc. A single spruce tree of this habit would sometimes make a pretty good shelter, while the rocks on each side were your walls.

As I walked over this plateau, I first observed, looking toward the summit, that the steep angular projections of the summit and elsewhere and the brows of the rocks were the parts chiefly covered with dark brown lichens,



— umbilicaria, etc., — as if they were to grow on the ridge and slopes of a man's nose only. It was the steepest and most exposed parts of the high rocks alone on which they grew, where you would think it most difficult for them to cling. They also covered the more rounded brows on the sides of the mountain, especially the east side, where they were very dense, fine, crisp, and firm, like a sort of shagreen, giving a firm footing or hold to the feet where it was needed. It was these that gave that Ararat-brown color of antiquity to these portions of the mountain, which a few miles distant could not be accounted for compared with the more prevalent gray. From the sky-blue you pass through the misty gray of the rocks, to this darker and more terrene color. The temples of the mountain are covered with lichens, which color the mountain for miles.

The west side descends steeply from the summit, but there is a broad almost plateau on the southeast and east, not much beneath the summit, with a precipitous termination on the east, and the rounded brows of the last are covered with the above-named lichens. A spur of moderate length runs off northerly; another, but lower,



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southwesterly; another, much longer, a little Higher than the last, southerly; and one longer and higher than these, one or two miles long, northeasterly. As you creep down over those eastern brows to look off the precipice, these rough and rigid lichens, forming a rigid crust, as it were baked, clone brown, in the stuff of centuries, afford a desirable hand and foot hold.

They seemed to me wild robins that placed their nests in the spruce up there. I noticed one nest. William Emerson, senior, says they do not breed on Staten Island. They do breed at least at Hudson's Bay. They are certainly a hardy bird, and are at home on this cool mountain-top.

We boiled some rice for our dinner, close by the edge of a rain-water pool and bog, on the plateau southeast from the summit. Though there was so little vegetation, our fire spread rapidly through the dry cladonia lichens on the rocks, and, the wind being pretty high, threatened to give its trouble, but we put it out with a spruce bough dipped in the pool. [And wet the ground with it. You cook beside such a moss for the sake of water.] I thought that if it had spread further, it must soon have come to a bog. Though you could hardly tell what was moist and what dry till the fire came to it. Nothing could be drier than the cladonia, which was often adjacent to a mass of moss saturated with moisture.

These rain-water pools or cisterns are a remarkable feature. There is a scarcity of bubbling springs, but this water was commonly cool enough in that atmosphere and warm as the day was. I do not know why they were not warmer, for they were shallow and the nights were not cold. Can there be some concealed snow or ice about? Hardly. They are quite shallow, but sometimes four or five rods over and with considerable mud at the bottom at first, decayed lichens, and disintegrated rock. Apparently these were the origin of the bogs, *Eriophorum vaginatum*, moss, and a few other boggy plants springing up in them and gradually filling them; yet, though sometimes filled with sedge (?) or fine grass, and generally the dwarfish *Eriophorum vaginatum* in the moss, they were singularly barren, and, unless they were fairly converted into swamps, contained very little variety. You never have to go far to find water of some kind. On the top, perhaps, of a square half-acre of almost bare rock, as in what we called our wash-room by our camp, you find a disintegrated boy, wet moss alternating with dry cladonia (sign and emblem of dryness in our neighborhood), and water stands in little holes, or if you look under the edges of a boulder there, you find standing water, yet cool to drink.

After dinner we kept on northeast over a high ridge east of the summit, whence was a good view of that part of Dublin and Jaffrey immediately under the mountain. There is a fine, large lake extending north and south, apparently in Dublin, -which it would be worth the while to sail on. When on the summit of this, I heard the ring of toads from a rain-pool a little lower and northeasterly. It carried me back nearly a month into spring; (though they are still ringing and copulating in Concord), it sounded so springlike in that clear, fresh air. Descending to that pool we found toads copulating at the bottom of the water.

In one or two places on this side of the mountain, which, as I have said, terminated in an abrupt precipice, I saw bogs or meadows four or six rods wide or more, but with only grass and moss and eriophorum, without bushes, in them, close to the edge of the mountain or precipice, where, if you stood between the meadow and the summit, looking east, there would appear to be a notch in the rim of the cap or saucer on the east and the meadow ready to spill over and run down the mountain on that side; but when you stood on this notched edge, the descent



was seen to be much less precipitous than you had expected. Such spongy mountain bogs, however, are evidently the sources of rivers. Lakes of the clouds when they are clear water. Between this and the northeast spur or ridge was the largest swamp or bog that I saw, consisting, perhaps, of between one and two acres, as I remember. It was a grassy and mossy bog without large bushes, in which you sank a foot, with a great many fallen trees in it, showing their bleached upper side here and there but almost completely buried in the moss. This must once have been a dense swamp, full of pretty large trees. The trees buried in the moss were much larger than any now standing at this height. The outlet of this, if it had any, must have been northwesterly. This was a wild place enough.

Having ascended the highest part of the northeastern ridge north of this bog, we returned to the summit, first to the ridge of the plateau, and west on it to the summit, crossing a ravine between. I noticed, in many places upon the mountain, sandy or gravelly spaces from a few feet to a rod in diameter, where the thin sward and loam



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appeared to have been recently removed or swept away. I was inclined to call them scars, and thought of very violent winds and tempests of rain as the cause, perhaps, but do not know how to account for them.

We had thus made a pretty complete survey of the top of the mountain. It is a very unique walk, and would be almost equally interesting to take though it were not elevated above the surrounding valleys. It often reminded me of my walks on the beach, and suggested how much both depend for their sublimity on solitude and dreariness. In both cases we feel the presence of some vast, titanic power. The rocks and valleys and bogs and rain-pools of the mountain are so wild and unfamiliar still that you do not recognize the one you left fifteen minutes before. This rocky region, forming what you may call the top of the mountain, must be more than two miles long by one wide in the middle, and you would need to ramble about it many times before it would begin to be familiar. There may be twenty little swamps so much alike in the main that [you] would not know Whether you had seen a particular one before, and the rocks are trackless and do not present the same point. so that it has the effect of the most intricate labyrinth and artificially extended walk.

This mountain is said in the Gazetteer to extend northeast [and] southwest five miles, by three wide, and the streams on the east to empty into the Contoocook and Merrimack, on the west into the Ashuelot and Connecticut; is 3718 feet high; and, judging from its account, the top was wooded fifty years ago.

We proceeded to get our tea on the summit, in the very place where I had made my bed for a night some fifteen years before. There were a great many insects of various kinds on the topmost rocks at this hour, and among them I noticed a yellow butterfly and several large brownish ones fluttering over the apex.

It was interesting to watch from that height the shadows of fair-weather clouds passing over the landscape. You could hardly distinguish them from forests. It reminded me of the similar shadows seen on the sea from the high bank of Cape Cod beach. There the perfect equality of the sea, atoned for the comparatively slight elevation of the bank. We do not commonly realize how constant and amusing a phenomenon this is in a sunnier day to one standing on a sufficiently elevated point. In the valley or on the plain you do not commonly notice the shadow of a cloud unless you are in it, but on a mountain-top, or on a lower elevation in a plain country or by the seaside, the shadows of clouds flitting over the landscape are a never-failing source of amusement. It is commonly easy to refer a shadow to its cloud, since in one direction its form is preserved with sufficient accuracy. Yet I was surprised to observe that a long, straggling downy cumulus extending north and south a few miles east of us, when the sun was perhaps an hour high, cast its shadow along the base of the Peterboro Hills, and did not fall on the other side, as I should have expected. It proved the clouds not so high as I supposed. It suggested how with tolerable accuracy you might easily calculate the height of a cloud with a quadrant and a good map of the country; e. g., observe at what distance the shadow of a cloud directly overhead strikes the earth, and then take the altitude of the sun, and you may presume that you have the base and two angles of a right-angled triangle, from which the rest may be calculated; or you may allow for the angle of elevation of the mountain as seen from the place where the shadow falls. Also you might determine the breadth of a cloud by observing the breadth of the shadow at a given distance, etc., etc. Many such calculations would be easy in such a locality. It was pleasant enough to see one man's farm in the shadow of a cloud, -which perhaps he thought covered all the Northern States, - while his neighbor's farm was in sunshine. It was still too hazy to allow of our seeing the shadow of the mountain, so we descended a little before the sun set, but already the hylodes had been peeping for some time.

Again the wood thrush, chewink, etc., sang at eve. I had also heard the song sparrow.

As the sky was more cloudy this evening, we looked out a shelving rock near our camp, where we might, take shelter from the rain in the night if necessary, i. e., if our roof did not prove tight enough. There were plenty of clefts and small caverns where you might be warm and dry. The mosquitoes troubled us a little this night.

Lying up there at this season, when the nighthawk is most musical reminded me of what I had noticed before, that this bird is crepuscular in its habits. It was heard by night only up to nine or ten o'clock and again just before dawn, and marked those periods or seasons like a clock. Its note very conveniently indicated the time of night. It was sufficient to hear the nighthawk booming when you awoke to know how the night got on, though you had no other evidence of the hour. I did not hear the sound of any beast. There are no longer any wolves to howl or panthers to scream. One man told me that many foxes took refuge from (logs and sportsmen on this mountain. The plants of cold northern bogs grow on this mountain-top, and even they have a boreal habit here, more dwarfish than such of them as grow in our swamps. The more memorable and peculiar plants of the mountaintop were the mountain cranberry and the *Potentilla tridentata*, the dwarfish spruce, *Arenaria Grœnlandica* (not now conspicuous). The *Ribes prostratum*, or fetid currant, was very abundant from quite near the summit to near the base, and its currant-acid fragrance was quite agreeable to me, partly, perhaps, from its relation to the currant of the gardens. You also notice many small weed-like mountain-ashes, six or eight inches high, which, on trying to pull up, you find to be very firmly rooted, having an old and large root out of proportion to their top. I might also name in this connection not only the blueberry but the very common but dwarfish *Eriophorum vaginatum*



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and the *Lycopodium annotinum*, also the amelanchier, variety *oligocarpa*. I was not prepared to find vegetation so much later there than below or with its, since I once found blueberries ripe on Wachusett unexpectedly early. However, it was a pleasing lateness, and gives one a chance to review some of his lessons in natural history. On the rocky part, the only plants, as I noticed, which were or had been in bloom were the salix, now generally done; *Ribes prostratum*, in prime; *Eriophorum vaginatum*, *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum*, just begun; *Amelanchier oligocarpa*, little, not long; water andromeda, ditto, ditto; and *probably* (?) the populus, birches (?), mayflower, and spruce.



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Note that in his journal, where [Thoreau](#) refers as above to “the Gazetteer,” he is referring as always to a volume now in Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library, the 7th edition published in 1839 in Concord, New Hampshire and Boston of John Hayward’s [THE NEW ENGLAND GAZETTEER](#); CONTAINING DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL THE STATES, COUNTIES AND TOWNS IN NEW ENGLAND: ALSO DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL MOUNTAINS, RIVERS, LAKES, CAPES, BAYS, HARBORS, ISLANDS, AND FASHIONABLE RESORTS WITHIN THAT TERRITORY. ALPHABETICALLY ARRANGED.

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BY JOHN HAYWARD,
Author of the *Columbian Traveller*, *Religious Creeds*, &c. &c.

SEVENTH EDITION.

CONCORD, N. H.:
ISRAEL S. BOYD AND WILLIAM WHITE.
BOSTON:
JOHN HAYWARD.
1839.

NEW ENGLAND GAZETTEER



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July: The Reverend [Grindall Reynolds](#) was installed as minister of the 1st Parish Church in [Concord](#).

The Alcotts moved into the Orchard House.

[Senator Jefferson Davis](#) would be spending time with his family, until October. In particular he would be spending the summer in and around Portland, Maine.

[John Brown](#) encouraged [James Redpath](#) to move from the [Kansas Territory](#) to Boston to help rally support for his plan for [servile insurrection](#). After the failure of Brown's 1859 attack on Harpers Ferry, Virginia, [James Redpath](#) would author a highly sympathetic biography of the executed abolitionist, THE PUBLIC LIFE OF CAPT. JOHN BROWN (1860).

October 7, Thursday: [Frederick Douglass](#) prepared resolutions for a public meeting on [capital punishment](#) held at Rochester, New York, that included various Quakers among its attendees, and [Susan B. Anthony](#). In effect, his argument was:

Murder is no cure for murder.

Resolved, That life is the great primary and most precious and comprehensive of all human rights— that whether it be coupled with virtue, honour, or happiness, or with sin, disgrace and misery, the continued possession of it is rightfully not a matter of violation; that it is neither deliberately nor voluntarily destroyed, either by individual separately, or combined in what is called Government; that it is a right derived solely and directly from God —the source of all goodness and the centre of all authority— and is most manifestly designed by Him to be held, esteemed, and revered among men as the most sacred, solemn and inviolable of all his gifts to man.

Resolved, That the love of man as manifested in his actions to his fellows, whether in his public or private relations, has very been the surest test of the presence of God in the soul; that the degree in which the sacredness of human life has been exemplified in all ages of the world, has been the truest index of the measure of human progress; that in proportion as the tale of barbarism has receded, a higher regard has been manifested for the God-given right to life, its inviolability has been strengthened in proportion to the development of the intellect and moral sentiments, and that conscience, reason, and revelation unite their testimony against the continuance of a custom, barbarous in its origin, antichristian in its continuance, vindictive in its character, and demoralizing in its tendencies.

Resolved, That any settled custom, precept, example or law, the observance of which necessarily tends to cheapen human life, or in any measure serves to diminish and weaken man's respect for it, is a custom, precept, example, and law utterly inconsistent



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with the law of eternal goodness written on the constitution of man by his Maker, and is diametrically opposed to the safety, welfare and happiness of mankind; and that however ancient and honorable such laws and customs may be in the eyes of prejudice, superstition and bigotry, they ought to be discountenanced, abolished and supplanted by a higher civilization and a holier and more merciful Christianity.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this meeting, when a criminal is firmly secured in the iron grasp of the government, and on that account can no longer endanger the peace and safety of society; that when he is wasted and emaciated by heavy chains and horrid thoughts, and long confinement in a gloomy cell - when, as it is often the case, he is completely transformed, both in temper and spirit- the execution of the death penalty on such an one is an act of cold blooded and barbarous enormity, and is as cowardly as it is cruel, and that instead of repressing and preventing the horrid crime of murder, it really serves by shocking and blunting the finer and better feelings of human nature, to undermine respect for human life, and leads directly to the perpetration of the crime which it would extinguish.

Resolved, That the time to advance opinions and principles is when those opinions and principles are upon trial, and threatened with outrage; and that while we have respectfully remained silent till the ends of justice have been served in fixing the guilt of the criminal, we now come in the sacred office of humanity and benevolence, to appeal for mercy at the hands of his Excellency, Governor King, on behalf of young Ira Stout, and to ask that his punishment shall be commuted from being capitally executed to imprisonment for life.

Resolved, That punishment as such, is a form of revenge, wreaking upon the criminal the pain he has inflicted on another, wrong in principle and pernicious in practice; arises out of the lowest propensities of human nature, and is opposed to the highest civilization: that it has no sanction in the spirit and teachings of Christ, which everywhere abound in loving kindness and forgiveness.

Resolved, That rather than visit the crime upon the head of the criminal, thus descending to his level, we ought to place him in a position to develop his higher nature; and instead of descending to a spirit of revenge, and degrading ourselves on one hand, and the criminal on the other, we should urge a thorough reform in our criminal laws - basing them on the truly Christian principle of love and good will towards men, and to reject forever the cold blooded and barbarous principle of retaliation.

Resolved, That a copy of the foregoing resolutions and the proceedings of this meeting, be transmitted to his Excellency, Governor King, as an expression of the sense of this meeting, and that the same be subscribed by the Chairman and Secretary thereof.

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Fall: Representative [Eli Thayer](#) was again nominated to represent Massachusetts's 9th District in the federal House of Representatives (he would again win the popular vote).

[Edwin Coppoc](#), who had migrated to the [Kansas Territory](#) as a settler, paid a visit to his family in [Springdale, Iowa](#), and while there he met [John Brown](#).



(He would surrender with Captain Brown in the engine house at [Harpers Ferry](#), and would be tried by a jury of his white male peers immediately after the conclusion of the trial of Captain Brown while his brother [Barclay Coppoc](#) was eluding capture. He would be sentenced to death on November 2, 1859. From prison before his hanging, he would write his adoptive mother Friend Ann Coppoc Raley, of a nonresistant-abolitionist [Quaker](#) farm family, that he was

“sorry to say that I was ever induced to raise a gun.”

He would be hung with [John E. Cook](#) on December 16, 1859. The body would be buried in Winona after a funeral attended by the entire town. Later the body would be reburied in Salem, Ohio.)



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December 20, Monday: The [John Brown](#) group raided into Missouri Territory and plundered the homes of a couple of slavemasters there. [Luke Fisher Parsons](#) was one of those who participated in this. Executing one of these property holders, they liberated 11 slaves. In addition the expedition confiscated several wagons, horses and mules, 5 firearms, and almost \$100.00 toward the expense of their antislavery crusade.

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

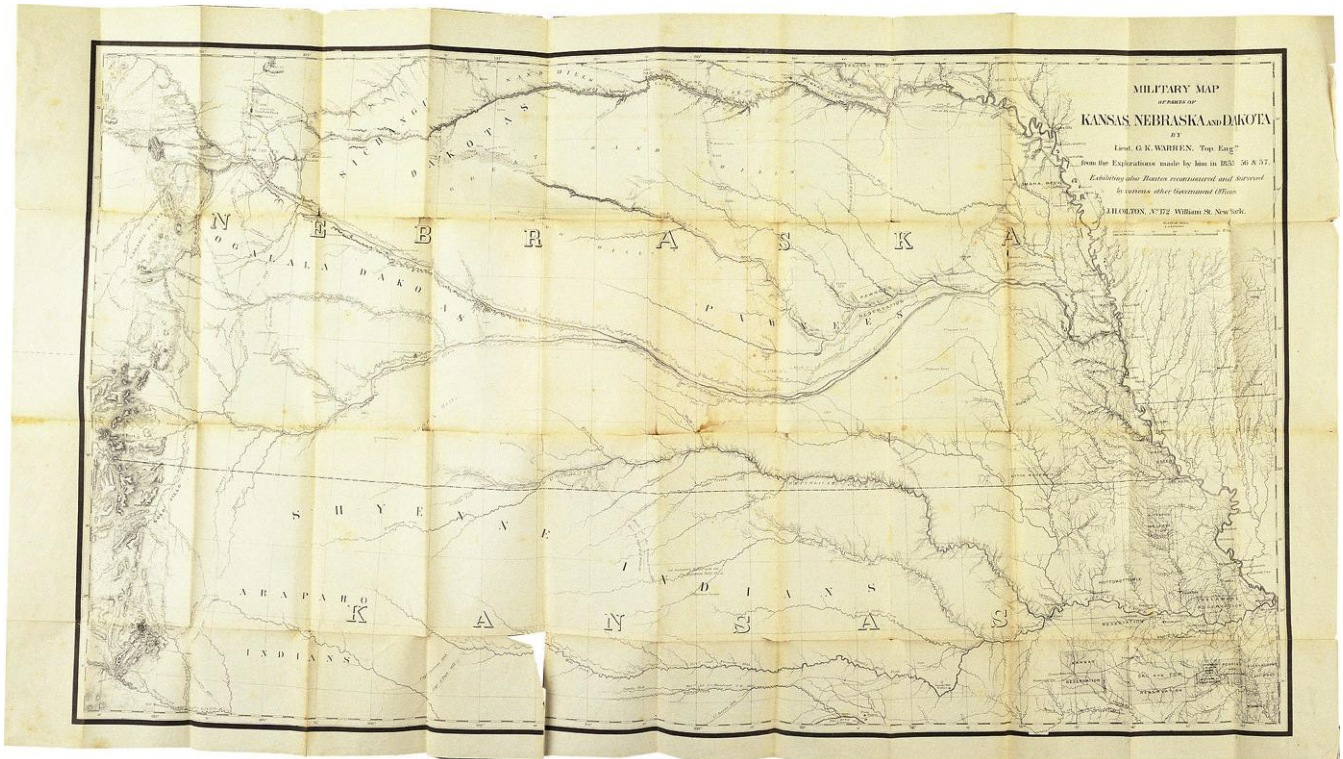


December 20: Walden is frozen over, except two small spots, less than half an acre in all, in middle.

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Abandoning [John Brown](#)'s violent agenda and radical abolitionism as a whole on the basis of a reading of President of Brown University [Francis Wayland](#)'s [THE LIMITATIONS OF HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY](#) (Boston: Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, 1838), [Richard Realf](#) determined to become a priest and spent 3 months of this year in the [Jesuit college at Spring Hill, Alabama](#) followed by further study in New Orleans (in the following year we will find him joining the celibate Shaker community in Union Village, Ohio).

The [Kansas Territory](#)'s 4th constitutional convention convened at Wyandotte, and the Wyandotte Constitution was written. The new town of Hyatt was virtually abandoned at this point, with many of its settlers moving on to Pikes Peak — nothing now remains.

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The firebrand Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) headed west, to aid in the Kansas free-state movement. There he would become involved again with [John Brown](#). In this year the following revealing comment



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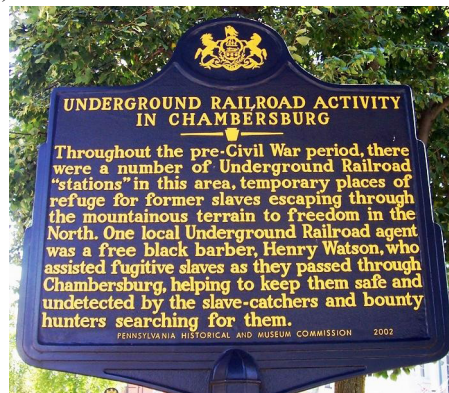
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appeared in a Kansas newspaper:

We believe it to our interest to discourage the settlement of free negroes in Kansas. The two races never have, and never can associate together on terms of equality. But at the same time, if we have got to have them here, we would have them educated; we are opposed to ignorance in every shape.

— Samuel Newitt Wood, in the Kansas Press, 1859, as quoted on page 418 of William Least Heat-Moon's PrairyErth (a deep map) [Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1991].

[Henry Watson](#) had, in his barbershop a few doors west of the town square in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and in his and his wife's nearby home on Mt. Moriah Street in the "Little Africa" district of Green Township, about \$500 in property that was at risk due to their [Underground Railroad](#) activity (a historical marker indicates the location of the barbershop, even though the barbershop itself could have played no function whatever in the harboring of escaping slaves).





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During this year the [Illinois](#) legislature chose Stephen A. Douglas for the federal Senate over [Abraham Lincoln](#), by a vote of 54 to 46 — but this was not because the Illinois legislature was experiencing any distress at Lincoln's racism.

There was a report from Arkansas that 3 white men there had been [hanged](#) when they had been found to have in their possession literature by the troublesome [antislavery](#) racist [Hinton Rowan Helper](#). In London, in this year, the US Minister was approached by a representative of Her Majesty's government, on behalf of a visiting white Englishman who had been caught distributing Helperite materials in Virginia. The US Minister refused to intercede on behalf of Her Majesty's government in the internal criminal affairs of the State of Virginia.

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(Get this, just as it wasn't enough to be a white man in the southern states of the United States of America, it also wasn't enough to be a racist — being the **wrong kind** of white racist could get one into really big trouble in the fastest way.)

[William Still](#) started a press campaign to end racial discrimination on Philadelphia's railroad cars. After [John Brown](#) and his insurrection at [Harpers Ferry](#) failed, Still would shelter some of his men and help them escape capture.

The slave Harriet Roberts Newby wrote 3 letters to her free mulatto husband [Dangerfield Newby](#) begging him to come and buy her and his children. The Virginia family that owned them was said to be in need of money, so the husband was traveling around Ohio asking for donations. The family of Dr. Jesse Jennings back in Warington [Warrenton?], Virginia, however, would reject Newby's offer, so when he was killed while serving as a bridge sentinel at [Harpers Ferry](#), he left an account amounting to \$742 (approximately \$13,000-\$19,000 in our turn-of-the-millennium dollars).



During the Pike's Peak Gold Rush, [James Redpath](#) and fellow journalist [Richard Josiah Hinton](#) prepared a guidebook for gold prospectors, A HAND-BOOK TO THE [KANSAS](#) TERRITORY AND THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS' GOLD REGION (J.H. Colton). It was expected that this guide would spur a greater number of Free Soil immigrants to settle on the great American grassy plains. [Redpath](#)'s [THE ROVING EDITOR; OR, TALKS WITH SLAVES IN THE SOUTHERN STATES](#) (A.B. Burdick), an [abolitionist](#) book dedicated to [John Brown](#), suggested that slavery could be ended by inciting "a few scores of rattling insurrections ... and by a little wholesome slaughter to arouse the conscience of the people" (the production costs for this had been fronted by [Gerrit Smith](#)). [Redpath](#) was giving no indication whether the aforesaid red path of slaughter ought to consist of the

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blood of white Americans killed by black, the blood of black Americans killed by white, or the blood of black and white Americans indiscriminately intermingled.⁵⁹



For 2 days during this year [Frederick Douglass](#) would meet secretly with Captain [John Brown](#) in an abandoned rock quarry near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania and be briefed on the progress of the plan to attack the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Douglass would have the common sense to opt out of this plot for [servile insurrection](#), and flee via [Canada](#) to England rather than himself personally participate. He would then remark humorously:



"I've always been more distinguished for running than for fighting."

(Note that in abandoning the struggle in this manner, Douglass was not doing anything that other folks were not doing. For instance, praising Brown's actions at Harpers Ferry but declaring that she could foresee a "crisis" which was going to be inevitable, the little lady [Harriet Beecher Stowe](#) who did more than anyone else to start America's biggest war would be withdrawing from all anti-slavery agitation and embarking in her swishy silk dress upon her 3d genteel tour of the grand hotels of the European subcontinent, paid for of course with the enormous extent of the ongoing royalties she was receiving from her writings — which had touched the pulse of the nation she was abandoning to its fate. Meanwhile another little lady, [Harriet Tubman](#), would be pleading to [John Brown](#) that she could not participate in his raid on the federal arsenal as she had become ill — although I know of no historian who has ever attempted to check the trustworthiness of that excuse for

59. [Francis Jackson Meriam](#) had helped [James Redpath](#) collect his materials for this book, in [Haiti](#) and across the American South.



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neglecting to respond to a summons to [servile insurrection](#).)⁶⁰

In [Harriet Beecher Stowe](#)'s new novel THE MINISTER'S WOOING set at the turn of the 18th Century, one of the characters, Candace the fat wife of Cato and slave of the Merwyns, was according to Nell Painter, "probably inspired in part by [Truth](#)" — despite the blunt reality that in Litchfield, Massachusetts the Beecher family's laundry had been done by a black woman, named Candace. When Mr. Merwyn tried to find out whether his slaves didn't really prefer the freedom from life's cares which sprang from their being so many pieces of property:

When General Washington was here, I hearn 'em read de Declaration ob Independence and Bill o' Rights; an' I tole Cato den, says I, "Ef dat ar' true, you an' I are as free as anybody." It stands to reason. Why, look at me — I a'n't a critter. ... I's a reasonable bein' —a woman, —as much a woman as anybody.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

This character modeled upon Truth had ideas not only about racism but also about [feminism](#):

"I de weaker vessel?" said Candace, looking down from the tower of her ample corpulence ... "I de weaker vessel? Umph!"

And she had ideas about Calvinism and man's natural depravity as products of the Adam who fell into sin:

... nebber did eat dat ar' apple ... Don't tell me!

60. A practical woman, she mistrusted these white men to the point at which she had recurrent nightmares in which [John Brown](#) and his sons figured as serpents. On the day of the raid, [Harriet Tubman](#) had a premonition that this was a lost cause.

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I have primarily concerned myself as a historian with the [servile insurrection](#) that the white man "[Captain](#)" [John Brown](#) (AKA "Nelson Hawkins") was attempting to instigate at the [Harpers Ferry](#) federal arsenal in 1859, a servile insurrection in regard to which he was expecting that he would be able to manipulate [Frederick Douglass](#) and [Harriet Tubman](#) into fronting for him. My contention will be that normal academic history writing is retrospective in nature, done in an awareness of actual outcomes and consumed by an audience driven by presentist concerns, and that as a result of this "ante-knowledge" (to coin a term), normal academic history writing presents an incomplete picture of the alternatives that had beforehand been available. Specifically, the fact that this Harpers Ferry situation resolved itself into a sectional [Civil War](#), and that what our academic historians now know about is this fratricidal sectional struggle that actually did come about, is causing them to overlook the raw fact that the situation might well have resolved itself instead into a racial genocide similar to the one that actually occurred in our northern coastlands in 1675/1676, known as "[King Phillip's War](#)" or might well have resolved itself instead into a class struggle similar to the one that almost occurred in the our coastal southlands in 1675/1676, known as "[Bacon's Rebellion](#)" —and that for many of the white Americans who had some advance knowledge of what John Brown was planning, such a racial genocide or such a class struggle would



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have been much to be preferred over our actual "civil war" brother-against-brother, white-on-white fratricide –this servile insurrection which Captain Brown was attempting to initiate, followed inevitably by a racial genocide, must have been a very acceptable outcome in their contemplation, an outcome that would have solved what they regarded as America's "negro problem" – resolved it once and for all.

America has had a series of race wars, first the war upon the [Pequot](#) tribe, then what is termed "[King Phillip's War](#)," then the attempt at servile insurrection by [Nat Turner](#) that was nipped in the bud in Virginia, then the attempt at servile insurrection by [Denmark Vesey](#) that was nipped in the bud in South Carolina, then the "Sioux Uprising" under [Little Crow](#) in Minnesota, then the "[Ghost Dancers](#)," etc. These struggles have always worked out very well for our white people, who always triumph in the end. So why are we so sure –given the unchallenged fact that the Secretary of War had been amply prewarned– that Captain Brown's plot was one that had been entirely unexpected by the US federal government, sprung as a surprise, a deep dark conspiracy?

It seems to me very plausible, given the number of people who had one or another piece of advance knowledge of what Brown was up to, that this thing actually came about not because it was unexpected and unwanted, but because it was very much expected and very much wanted.

(You know, and I know, that [President George W. Bush](#) was briefed beforehand on the likelihood that Osama bin Laden would strike somewhere somehow soon inside the United States of America, and you know and I know that "W" did nothing whatever with this information, just as [Secretary of War John Buchanan Floyd](#) in 1859 did nothing whatever with the information that John Brown was going to attack a federal arsenal in order to seize weapons in order to stage a servile insurrection. You know, and I know, also, that the [NeoCons](#) already had an office in the Pentagon, in which they were developing a laundry list of must-do items which they were going to spring on the citizenry the moment we were infuriated by an attack upon our nation – must-get-done items such as our seemed-like-a-good-idea-at-the-time invasion of Iraq. Of what relevance, therefore, is the conceit that the attack on the Twin Towers was a "sneak attack"? – Is this not of the same relevance as the conceit that John Brown's attack on Harpers Ferry was a "sneak attack"?)

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January: [Lysander Spooner](#), who was well aware of [John Brown](#)'s plans for the raid on the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#), wrote to [Gerrit Smith](#) warning that Brown had neither the men nor the resources to succeed.



(Since this man was not a member of the [Secret "Six"](#), but was what we would ordinarily identify instead as a philosophical anarchist, obviously the secret held by the group was not that much of a secret!)



It was, for instance, no secret to the American business community, and had not been since his bankruptcy in 1842, that [John Brown](#)'s "wherewithal" was scanty:

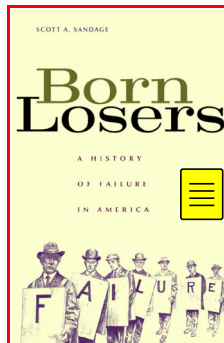
A failed surveyor, farmer, speculator, schoolteacher, tanner, and cattleman, he showed up as a wool dealer in an 1848 credit report: "his condition is questionable." Winter 1849: "may or may not be good." Summer 1850: "his means are equally obscure." Still in his forties, he looked sixty to credit reporters. The agency lost him when he switched lines of work yet again, only



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to fail yet again. Like many another misfit who pushed a doomed venture too far, he quit when he had no other choice. Having grown whiskers for the first time, his craggy face looked still more ancient. Everyone had an opinion of this broken man. "Served him right." Overhearing such comments, Thoreau said he felt proud even to know him and questioned why people "talk as if a man's death were a failure, and his continued life, be it of whatever character, were a success." The bankrupt court had restored this loser's freedom in 1842. Now it was 1859, and no earthly court could save John Brown after his failure at Harpers Ferry.



January 7, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to from Boston by the inheriting son Henry Walker Frost, to appear in the East Cambridge Probate Court at 10AM on the following Tuesday, January 11th, in order to warrant the will which had been left by the deceased Reverend Barzillai Frost — which he and his father [John Thoreau](#) had witnessed some three years before.

Boston Jan 7th. 1859

Mr H. D. Thoreau.

Dear Sir,

*Will you do me the favor of meeting me at the Probate Court room
in East Cambridge on Tuesday next (11th inst) at ten o'clock A. M.
in order to prove my father's will to which {MS torn} witness.*

My mother {MS torn} that {portion of page missing}

[John Brown](#) arrived in [Concord](#), to stay overnight with [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) in preparation for his Saturday evening lecture before the Concord Lyceum.



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January 8, Saturday evening: [Henry Thoreau](#) again met [John Brown](#), who was again staying with [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), after hearing Brown lecture at the Concord Town Hall. [Waldo Emerson](#), [Bronson Alcott](#), and [Louisa May Alcott](#) were also in that audience. In the course of this trip Brown would raise a total of about \$2,000.⁰⁰ in [Concord](#) and Boston. Sanborn would report later, on this period of his life, for the benefit of his former [Harvard College](#) classmates, that:

There are several events in my life since graduating, which are "worthy of record," because they have brought me in contact with the great political revolution which has taken place since 1855. I was actively engaged in the effort to make Kansas a free State in 1856-7-8, which finally succeeded in 1861. I was a friend and supporter of Captain John Brown in his expedition into Virginia in 1859, and became publicly known in that connection.

THE ALCOTT FAMILY

January 25, Tuesday: Hell und Voll op.216, a waltz by Johann Strauss, was performed for the initial time, in the Sophiensaal, Vienna.

After the [Battle of the Spurs](#) with no casualties, [John Brown](#) was able to leave the [Kansas Territory](#) with 12 freed slaves. Soon he and his fighters would show up in [Chicago](#) with 11 of these black men in tow, at the home of the abolitionist detective Alan Pinkerton, who would forward them to [John Jones](#)'s station on the [Underground Railroad](#) at 116 Edinah Street (when Brown would be hung in Virginia, presumably he would be hung attired in the new suit of clothes provided on that visit by Jones, a suit that he had been fashioning at the time for a Chicago customer of approximately the same size).



January 25. The river has gone down about eight inches, and the ice still adhering to the shore all about the meadows slants downward for some four or five feet till it meets the water, and it is there cracked, often letting the water up to overflow it, so that it is hard to get off and on in some places.

That channel ice of the 22d (q. v.), lifted up, looks thin, thus:-

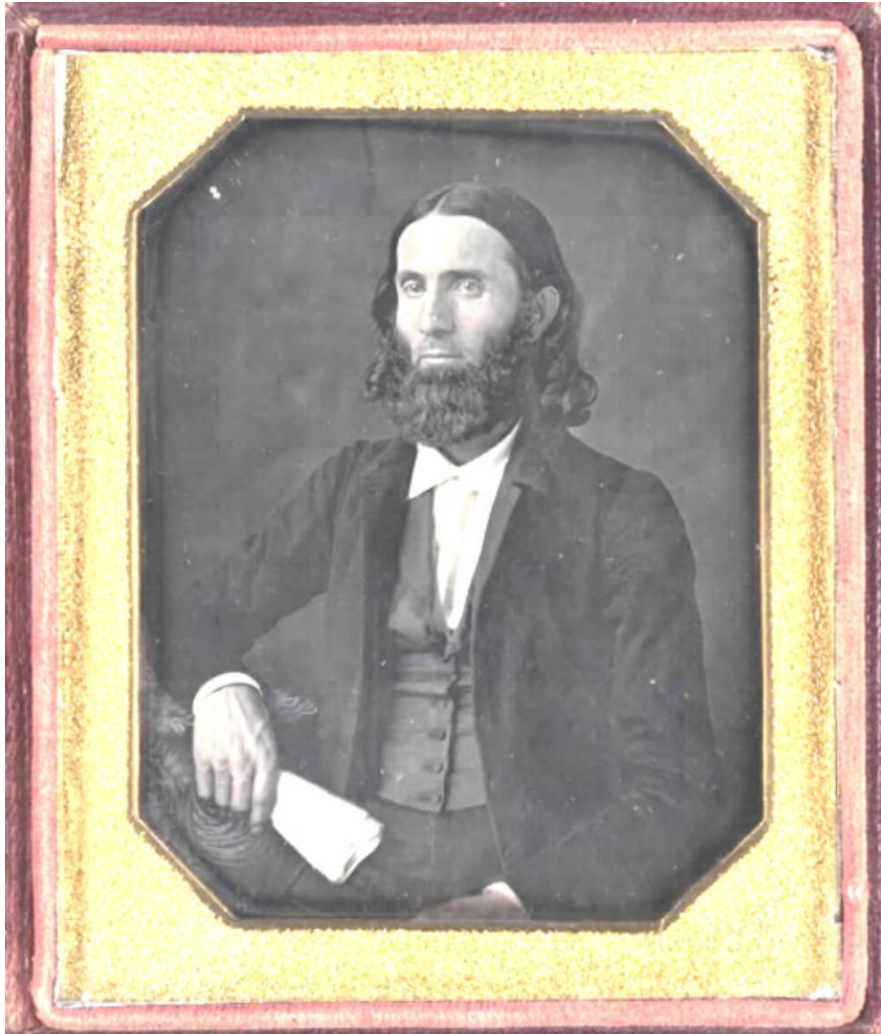
The edges of the outside portions are more lifted up now, apparently by the weight of the water on them.

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January 28, Friday: Charles Calistus Burleigh spoke on “No slave-hunting in the Old Bay State” at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Later in the year the society would issue this speech as a tract.



Seth Thomas, American clock maker, died.

[Carl Adolph Agardh](#) died in Karlstad, Sweden.

[John Brown](#) was again a house guest at the hilltop mansion of [Frederick Douglass](#) on St. Paul Avenue (now South Avenue) near Rochester, New York. While in residence he would pen such instructions as “The entire personal and real property of all persons known to be acting either directly or indirectly with or for the enemy, or found in arms with them, or found willfully holding slaves, shall be confiscated and taken whenever and wherever it may be found in either free or slave States” and “Persons convicted on impartial trial of desertion to the enemy ... acting as spies, or of treacherous surrender of property, ammuniton, provisions, or supplies

of any kind, roads, bridges, persons, or fortifications, shall be put to death, and their property confiscated.”



January 28. Melvin tells me that one with whom he deals below says that the best musquash skins come from Concord River, and it is because our musquash are so fat. M. says that they eat apples, and he has seen where they have eaten acorns, and Isaiah Green told him and convinced him that they ate his seed-corn in the hill. He weighed a very large one the other day, and it weighed five pounds. Thinks they would not commonly weigh more than three.

When you have been deprived of your usual quantity of sleep for several nights, you sleep much more soundly for it, and wake up suddenly like a bullet that strikes a wall.




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February 25, Friday: [John Brown](#) came a 3d time to the [Quaker](#) community of [Springdale, Iowa](#), with some of his men and 11 or 12 Missouri slave escapees on their way via Chicago to Canada. A total of \$3,250 in rewards were being offered at the time for his capture.

In Concord, [Henry Thoreau](#) overheard and recorded some bavardage about the profitability of the milk business:



(In October  Thoreau would be comparing and contrasting, in his journal, this business of selling cow's milk by the quart, to an alleged business of selling human blood by the quart, in the case of John Brown.)



February 25: Heard Staples, Tuttle, E. Wood, N. Barrett, and others this morning at the post-office talking about the profit of milk-farming. The general conclusion seemed to be that it was less profitable than it was three years ago. Yet Staples thought he could name half a dozen who had done well. He named one. He thought he could name eight or ten who had paid off the mortgages on their farms by this means within a few years. Tuttle said he would give him a good supper if he would name three. Staples named only the one referred to above, David Buttrick, but he added, looking at Tuttle, "There is yourself. You know you came to town with nothing in your pocket but an old razor, a few pennies, and a damned dull jack-knife, and now you are richer than David Buttrick." "Well," answered Tuttle, "I shouldn't have been, if I had n't used the razor so much." When it snowed yesterday very large flakes, an inch in diameter, Aunt said, "They are picking geese." This, it seems, is an old saying.

Measure your health by your sympathy with morning and spring. If there is no response in you to the awakening of nature,— if the prospect of an early morning walk does not banish sleep, if the warble of the first bluebird does not thrill you,— know that the morning and spring of your life are past. Thus may you feel your pulse.

I heard this morning a nuthatch on the elms in the street. I think that they are heard oftener and again [*sic*] at the approach of spring, just as the *phaë* note of the chickadee is; and so their *gnah gnah* is a herald of the spring. Joe Smith says that he saw blackbirds this morning. I hear that robins were seen a week or more ago. So the birds are quite early this year.

P. M. — Up river on ice.

I see a handful of the scarlet *Rosa Carolina* hips in the crotch of a willow on some mud, a foot or more above the ice. They are partly eaten, and I think were placed there by a musquash. The rose bush, with a few hips on it, still stands in the ice within a few feet. Goodwin says he has seen their tracks eight or ten rods long to an apple tree near the water, where they have been for apples.

Along edge of Staples's meadow sprout-land, the young maples, some three years old, are stripped down, *i.e.* the lower branches for a foot or two, by the ice falling. This barks and wounds the young trees severely.



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The ice over the middle of the river is now alternately dark and whitish. I see the river beginning to show dark through the thinnest parts, in broad crescents convex up-stream, single or connected.



A good book is not made in the cheap and offhand manner of many of our scientific Reports, ushered in by the message of the President communicating it to Congress, and the order of Congress that so many thousand copies be printed, with the letters of instruction for the Secretary of the Interior (or rather exterior); the bulk of the book being a journal of a picnic or sporting expedition by a brevet Lieutenant-Colonel, illustrated by photographs of the traveller's footsteps across the plains and an admirable engraving of his native village as it appeared on leaving it, and followed by an appendix on the paleontology of the route by a distinguished savant who was not there, the last illustrated by very finely executed engravings of some old broken shells picked up on the road. There are several men of whose comings and goings the town knows little. I mean the trappers. They may be seen coming from the woods and river, perhaps with nothing in their hands, and you do not suspect what they have been about. They go about their business in a stealthy manner for fear that any shall see where they set their traps,— for the fur trade still flourishes here. Every year they visit the out-of-the-way swamps and meadows and brooks to set or examine their traps for musquash or mink, and the owners of the land commonly know nothing of it. But, few as the trappers are here, it seems by Goodwin's accounts that they steal one another's traps.

All the criticism which I got on my lecture on Autumnal Tints at Worcester on the 22d was that I assumed that my audience had not seen so much of them as they had. But after reading it I am more than ever convinced that they have not seen much of them,— that there are very few persons who do see much of nature.

March 10, Thursday: The cornerstone of the Villa Rossini was laid in Paris.

The mules and wagons obtained in Missouri having been purchased in [Springdale, Iowa](#) by [Friend John Hunt Painter](#) so that [John Brown](#) would have money for railroad fares, the rescued slaves were dispatched by boxcar from West Liberty toward [Chicago](#). Brown also departed for [Chicago](#) and then Canada.



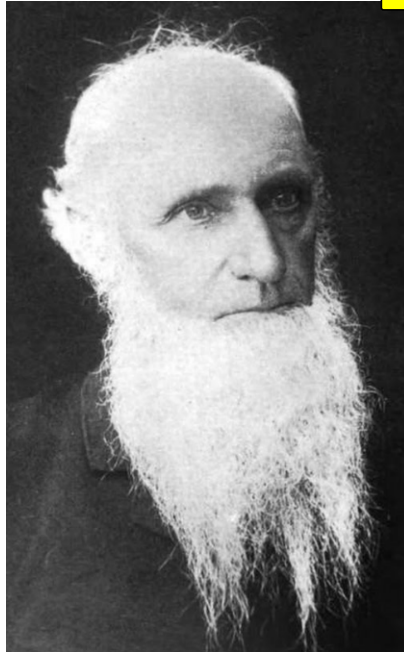
Shortly before Brown's last departure from the Quaker settlement he sold such plunder as mules, harness, wagons, etc. In such business John H. Painter, then a justice of the peace, was made the trusted assistant. It was Painter who, after Brown had gone, shipped the latter's Sharpe's rifles and revolvers -196 in all-marked carpenter's tools. They were billed from West Liberty to



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Harper's Ferry to some unknown party.



March 10: 6 A. M.—To Hill.

I see at near [SIC] the stone bridge where the strong northwest wind of last night broke the thin ice just formed, and set the irregular triangular pieces on their edges quite perpendicular and directed northwest and southeast and pretty close together, about nine inches high, for half a dozen rods, like a dense fleet of schooners with their mainsails set.

And already, when near the road, I hear the warble of my first *Concord* bluebird, borne to me from the hill through the still morning air, and, looking up, I see him plainly, though so far away, a dark speck in the top of a walnut.

When I reach the Assabet above the Hemlocks, I hear a loud crashing or brattling sound, and, looking through the trees, see that it is the thin ice of the night, half an hour after sunrise, now swiftly borne down the stream in large fleets and going to wreck against the thick old ice on each side. This evidently is a phenomenon of the morning. The river, too, has just waked up, and, no doubt, a river in midsummer as well as in winter recognizes the advent of the morning as much as a man or an animal does. They retire at night and awake in the morning. Looking northeast over Hosmer's meadow, I see still the rosy light reflected from the low snow-spits, alternating with green ice there. Apparently because the angles of incidence and excidence are equal, therefore we see the green in ice at sundown when we look aslant over the ice, our visual ray making such an angle with it as the yellow light from the western horizon does in coming to it.

P. M.—To Witherell Vale.

There are some who never do nor say anything, whose life merely excites expectation. Their excellence reaches no further than a gesture or mode of carrying themselves. They are a sash dangling from the waist, or a sculptured war-club over the shoulder. They are like fine-edged tools gradually becoming rusty in a shop-window. I like as well, if not better, to see a piece of iron or steel, out of which many such tools will be made, or the bush-whack in a man's hand.

When I meet gentlemen and ladies, I am reminded of the extent of the inhabitable and uninhabitable globe; I exclaim to myself, Surfaces! surfaces! If the outside of a man is so variegated and extensive, what must the inside be? You are high up the Platte River, traversing deserts, plains covered with soda, with no deeper hollow than a prairie-dog hole tenanted also by owls and venomous snakes.

As I look toward the woods (from Wood's Bridge), I perceive the spring in the softened air. [Vide April 15.]



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This is to me the most interesting and affecting phenomenon of the season as yet. Apparently in consequence of the very warm sun, this still and clear day, falling on the earth four fifths covered with snow and ice, there is an almost invisible vapor held in suspension, which is like a thin coat or enamel applied to every object, and especially it gives to the woods, of pine and oak intermingled, a softened and more living appearance. They evidently stand in a more genial atmosphere than before. Looking more low, I see that shimmering in the air over the earth which betrays the evaporation going on. Looking through this transparent vapor, all surfaces, not osiers and open waters alone, look more vivid. The hardness of winter is relaxed.

There is a fine effluence surrounding the wood, as if the sap had begun to stir and you could detect it a mile off. Such is the difference between an object seen through a warm, moist, and soft air and a cold, dry, hard one. Such is the genialness of nature that the trees appear to have put out feelers by which our senses apprehend them more tenderly. I do not know that the woods are ever more beautiful, or affect me more.

I feel it to be a greater success as a lecturer to affect uncultivated natures than to affect the most refined, for all cultivation is necessarily superficial, and its roots may not even be *directed toward* the centre of the being.

Rivers, too, like the walker, unbutton their icy coats, and we see the dark bosoms of their channels in the midst of the ice. Again, in pools of melted snow, or where the river has risen, I look into clear, placid water, and see the russet grassy bottom in the sun.

Look up or down the open channel now, so smooth, like a hibernating, animal that has ventured to come out to the mouth of its burrow. One way, perhaps, it is like melted silver alloyed with copper. It goes nibbling off the edge of the thick ice on each side. Here and there I see a musquash sitting in the sun on the edge of the ice, eating a clam, and the clamshells it has left are strewn along the edge. Ever and anon he drops into the liquid mirror, and soon reappears with another clam. This clear, placid, silvery water is evidently a phenomenon of spring. Winter could not show us this.

A broad channel of water separates the dry land from the ice, and the musquash-hunter finds it hard to reach the game he has shot on the ice.

Fine red-stemmed mosses have begun to push and bud on Clamshell bank, growing in the Indian ashes where surface taken off. [Carpenter](#) says, "The first green crust upon the cinders with which the surface of Ascension Island was covered, consisted of minute mosses."

We sit in the sun on the side of Money-Diggers' Hill, amid the crimson low blueberry shoots and the withered *Andropogon scoparius* and the still erect *Solidago arguta* (var. the common) and the tall stubble thickly hung with fresh gleaming cobwebs. There are some grayish moths out, etc.; some gnats.

I see the bridge far away over the ice resting on its black piers above the ice which is lifted around it. It is short-legged now. This level or horizontal line resting on perpendicular black ones is always an interesting sight to me.

As we sit in this wonderful air, many sounds—that of woodchopping, for one—come to our ears agreeably blunted or muffled, even like the drumming of a partridge, not sharp and rending as in winter and recently. If a partridge should drum in winter, probably it would not reverberate so softly through the wood and sound indefinitely far. Our voices, even, sound differently and betray the spring. We speak as in a house, in a warm apartment still, with relaxed muscles and softened voices. The voice, like a woodchuck in his burrow, is met and lapped in and encouraged by all genial and sunny influences. There may be heard now, perhaps, under south hillsides and the south sides of houses, a slight murmur of conversation, as of insects, out of doors.

These earliest spring days are peculiarly pleasant. We shall have no more of them for a year. I am apt to forget that we may have raw and blustering days a month hence. The combination of this delicious air, which you do not want to be warmer or softer, with the presence of ice and snow, you sitting on the bare russet portions, the south hillsides, of the earth, this is the charm of these days. It is the summer beginning to show itself like an old friend in the midst of winter. You ramble from one drier russet patch to another. These are your stages. You have the air and sun of summer, over snow and ice, and in some places even the rustling of dry leaves under your feet, as in Indian-summer days.

The bluebird on the apple tree, warbling so innocently to inquire if any of its mates are within call, — the angel of the spring! Fair and innocent, yet the offspring of the earth. The color of the sky above and of the subsoil beneath. Suggesting what sweet and innocent melody (terrestrial melody) may have its birthplace between the sky and the ground.

Two frogs (may have been *Rana fontinalis*; did not see them) jumped into Hosmer's grassy ditch.

See in one place a small swarm of insects flying or gyrating, dancing like large tipulidæ. The dance within the compass of a foot always above a piece of snow of the same size in the midst of bare ground.

The most ornamental tree I have seen this spring was the willow full of catkins now showing most of their down, in front of Puffer's house.



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March 12, Saturday: The prelude to *Tristan und Isolde* by [Richard Wagner](#) was performed for the initial time, in Prague, conducted by Hans von Bülow. This was the version with a concert ending by von Bülow.

LISTEN TO IT NOW

A story by [Louisa May Alcott](#) appeared in Boston's [Saturday Evening Gazette](#), "Mark Field's Mistake."

[George DeBaptiste](#) met [Frederick Douglass](#) and [John Brown](#) in Detroit, Michigan and heard their pitch for [servile insurrection](#).



March 12. Saturday. P.M. – Walk in rain to Ministerial Swamp.

Going up the railroad in this rain, with a south wind, I see a pretty thick low fog extending across the railroad only against Dennis's Swamp. There being much more ice and snow within the swamp, the vapor is condensed and is blown northward over the railroad. I see these local fogs with always the same origin, i. e., large masses of snow or ice, in swamps or woods, perhaps the north sides of hills, in several places afterward. The air is warm. As often as we came to a particularly icy or snowy place, as Harrington's road in woods, we found ourselves in a fog.

It is a regular spring rain, such as I remember walking in, – windy but warm. It alternately rains hard and then holds up a little. A similar alternation we see in the waves of water and all undulating surfaces, – in snow and sand and the clouds (the mackerel sky). Now you walk in a comparative lull, anticipating fair weather, with but a slight drizzling, and anon the wind blows and the rain drives down harder than ever. In one of these lulls, as I passed the Joe Hosmer (rough-cast) house, I thought I never saw any bank so handsome as the russet hillside behind it. It is a very barren, exhausted soil, where the cladonia lichens abound, and the lower side is a flowing sand, but this russet grass with its weeds, being saturated with moisture, was in this light the richest brown, methought, that I ever saw. There was the pale brown of the grass, red browns of some weeds (sarrothra and pinweed probably), dark browns of huckleberry and sweet-fern stems, and the very visible green of the cladonias thirty rods off, and the rich brown fringes where the broken sod hung over the edge of the sand-bank. I did not see the browns of withered vegetation so rich last fall, and methinks these terrestrial lichens were never more fair and prominent. On some knolls these vivid and rampant lichens as it were dwarf the oaks. A peculiar and unaccountable light seemed to fall on that bank or hillside, though it was thick storm all around. A sort of Newfoundland sun seemed to be shining on it. It was such a light that you looked around for the sun that might be shining on it. Both the common largest and the very smallest hypericums (Sarrothra) and the pinweeds were very rich browns at a little distance, coloring whole fields, and also withered and fallen ferns, reeking wet. It was a prospect to excite a reindeer. These tints of brown were as softly and richly fair and sufficing as the most brilliant autumnal tints. In fair and dry weather these spots may be commonplace, but now they are worthy to tempt the painter's brush. The picture should be the side of a barren lichen-clad hill with a flowing sand-bank beneath, a few blackish huckleberry bushes here and there, and bright white patches of snow here and there in the ravines, the hill running east and west and seen through the storm from a point twenty or thirty rods south. This kind of light, the air being full of rain and all vegetation dripping with it, brings out the browns wonderfully. [Vide (FOUR PAGES BELOW).]

I notice now particularly the willows by the railroad, full of dark cones, as a fruit. The broad radical leaves of (apparently) water dock are very fresh and conspicuous.

See two ducks flying over Ministerial Swamp.

In one place in the meadow southeast of Tarbell's, I find on the ice, about a couple of holes an inch across where a little stubble shows itself, a great many small ants dead, – say a thousand. They are strewn about the holes for six or eight inches, and are collected in a dense heap about the base of the stubble. I take up a mass of them on my knife, each one entire, but now, of course, all wet and adhering together. It looks as if they had been tempted out by the warmth of the sun and had been frozen or drowned; or is it possible that they were killed by the frost last fall and now washed up through the ice? I think, from their position around the base of the stubble in that little hole in the ice, that they came out of the earth and clustered there since the ice melted to that extent. There are many other insects and worms and caterpillars (and especially spiders, dead) on the ice, there as well as elsewhere.

I perceive that a freshet which washes the earth bare in the winter and causes a great flow of water over it in that state –when it is not soaked up– must destroy a great many insects and worms. I find a great many that



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appear to have been drowned rather than frozen. May not this have tempted the bluebirds on early this year?

Spring: [Luke Fisher Parsons](#) and his party of gold adventurers were waiting in Council Bluffs, Iowa for grass to grow on the plains, to nourish their horses, when he received letters from [John Brown](#) and from [John Henry Kagi](#) saying “You must turn back. Sure go this time. We depend on you; come, do come.” He disregarded these letters and continued west. Then, while crossing Nebraska, the party learned that the Pikes Peak Gold Rush was a bust, and Parsons headed south and back to Lawrence, [Kansas](#). He sold his stake in the gold-seeking venture to another participant and went to Osawatomie and worked in a mill.

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CATHOLICISM

- I. *Usury Laws*
- II. *Catholicity and Civilization*
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MAGAZINES

ORESTES AUGUSTUS BROWNSON

Parsons continued in his diary:

March 21, [1859](#): I made a bargain with the boys to go to Pikes Peak. Joseph Irvine got my trunk and baggage from Rockford. Since coming to Byron, I have been working in Moses Fisk's carriage shop.

March 23, [1859](#): Made four camp chairs and two boxes for side of wagon to be used for Pikes Peak trip. Father go me \$9.00 worth of clothing in Rockford at a good bargain.

March 24, [1859](#): Stayed at my uncle Charles Fisher's tonight. Mother and the girls are at work on my shirts. Showed Moses a diagram for making a stick seat for a buggy.

March 25, [1859](#): Sister Addie, Sister Helen, friend Carried, Frank Biglow, Dr. Stevens and I spent the evening at Louvie Hall's very pleasantly.

March 26, [1859](#): Went out to David Whittaker's. Stayed all night. I bought a pair of boots at Mix's for #3.50 and bought a pair of gloves at George Aims' for \$1.00. Several teams went through here enroute for Pikes Peak. Got money of George Swan.

March 27, [1859](#): Sunday. Did not go to Meeting. Wrote to John Brown, Jr. Saw my brother-in-law Joseph Irwin and uncle Charles Fisher in town. Bid them good-bye. In the evening, went down to



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see Louvie Hall.

March 28, [1859](#): We did not start west for it rained all night and all day and is snowing tonight. Mr. Harris and Frank Biglow bought another cow for our trip.

March 31, [1859](#): A raft went down the river with dry goods. Two wagons arrived here from Rockford bound for Pikes Peak.

April 2, [1859](#): Father, Dr. Stevens and Biglow went to hear Miss Isabelle Schongle lecture on "Spiritualism". Father like it very much.

April 3, [1859](#): Sunday. I went to hear Miss Schongle twice. In the evening, we got together at Jerald's (a groceryman) and gave him the money to buy provisions at St. Louise for our trip to Pikes Peak.

April 5, [1859](#): We left Byron this afternoon for Pikes Peak with covered wagon drawn by a yoke of steers and yoke of cows, and are now four miles out. I officiate as cook. The road is good. Have about twenty-eight or thirty hundred pound load. Town meeting today.

April 6, [1859](#): Fourteen and one-half miles from Byron. Pretty hard going today. We did not camp until long after dark.

April 7, [1859](#): Camped on a hill between Fullerton and Cherry Grove. Stopped late at night. No wood, water, or hay. We traveled about nine miles and had to back our load out of mud twice.

April 8, [1859](#): We backed our load twice today. We talked with several who reported discouraging news from the mines at Pikes Peak. Several teams came back after going part way through Iowa.

April 9, [1859](#): On ferry boat crossing from Savannah, Iowa. I cooked the prairie chickens and wild pigeons for breakfast and made some biscuits. Savannah is a dirty little hole.

April 12, [1859](#): Sitting in wagon while the boys go back with teams to help others through Deep Creek. This is the worst place I ever saw. We had on six yoke of oxen and then liked to have stuck.

April 14, [1859](#): Slept in barn. Snowed last night. We wait for better roads. Nearly every one in Iowa seems to be going to the Peak as soon as grass starts. Charles is generally constitutionally tired. He is writing home now.

April 18, [1859](#): At noon we got hay. Came through some bad places today. Had on nine yoke of oxen. Once they pulled four times before the wagon started.

April 19, [1859](#): Doubled teams twice. Made fifteen miles. Difficult getting hay. Passed through Fair View, Iowa. Yesterday and today one of our black oxen troubled us by lying down in the road.

April 20, [1859](#): We have come through a good many hard places



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today. Had to double teams four times. We are making an effort to lighten our load. Six horse teams passed us today. We passed through Marion, Iowa which is in Linn County.

April 21, [1859](#): Camped late, twelve miles west of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, which we passed through today. Have traveled fifteen miles. We went into a lodge of Musqualla Indians. I bought some maple sugar of them.

April 25, [1859](#): Camped two miles west of West Field. Made twenty-one miles. Passed through Brooklyn in sight of Grinnell and through West Field, Iowa. I passed over this road about sixteen months ago with old John Brown of Kansas Territory. We had to double teams once.

April 26, [1859](#): Roads muddy, but got through without doubling teams. Camped three miles west of Newton in Jasper County. Made twelve miles. Saw any amount of teams. Some have turned back. The road is lined with old camping places.

April 29, [1859](#): Noon in Ft. Des Moines. We came through Rising Sun this morning. Crossed the Des Moines River on toll bridge and camped five miles south of Ft. Des Moines at noon today. Nine hundred and forty Pikes Peak teams had crossed the bridge in Des Moines.

April 30, [1859](#): Camped twenty-five miles west of Winterset. Made nineteen miles. Some have turned their cows on grass and intend to wait until there is enough for them to travel on. Passed through northwest corner of Warren County.

May 8, [1859](#): Made seventeen miles. Camped on bottom between Council Bluffs, Iowa and Omaha, Nebraska. I think there are two hundred and fifty teams in sight. The Bluffs are a very pretty sight. Only one principal street.

May 11, [1859](#): Came over into Nebraska. Camped three miles north of Omaha.

May 15, [1859](#): Went over to Council Bluffs to see how the pulse beat with the "Peakers," and we got very wet. I am now in the River House, situated on the river bottom three miles from the Bluffs.

May 17, [1859](#): Left Omaha about ten o'clock. Made ten miles. Found water, grass, and willow for wood. Net about twenty-five teams returning.

May 22, [1859](#): Am sitting on the north bank of the Platte River at Shinn's Ferry. Three teams here before us. Wind too high to cross.

May 23, [1859](#): Still at the ferry and wind too high to go to the other side with a load, but they have been coming to this side all day.

May 24, [1859](#): Now on the opposite side of the Platte River. We crossed on two ferries. One on each side of an island three-



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fourths of a mile wide. I never saw the wind blow harder in my life than it did then.

May 27, [1859](#): Gave up going to Pikes Peak, concluded to go to Kansas instead. Maybe I can get job of breaking prairie with oxen.

May 29, [1859](#): Made fifteen miles to Weeping Water. Passed thirty-seven Mormon teams.

May 31, [1859](#): Camped in the suburbs of Nebraska City. Saw a man who is going to drive to Salt Lake City, Utah.

June 1, [1859](#): Frank Biglow bought out Charles and we left him to go home. Made about seventeen miles. Camped in Peru on the bank of the Missouri River. Here are some people from Wooster, Mass.

June 3, [1859](#): Camped on Big Muddy. Made about eighteen miles. This is a good country. Fine land and plenty of timber. The Mulley cow got so tender footed that we shod her with leather.

June 6, [1859](#): Rode all day. My head is swelled so with ivy poisoning that I can only see with one eye. Very sick last night. Last night one of the Indian boys prescribed for me in a spiritual trance.

June 7, [1859](#): Rode all day. Face some better. We took a high divide and traveled without any road. Camped on military road forty miles out from Leavenworth, Kansas.

June 8, [1859](#): Walked (north is crossed out) all day. Saw a train of Mexicans on their way to Kansas City by way of Santa Fe Trail. We passed in sight of Atchison, Kansas.

June 10, [1859](#): Two miles out of Leavenworth. I should not have known the place after an absence of eighteen months. It is quite a large city. I got a Tribune – the first paper I have seen since I left home.

June 11, [1859](#): Had our dinner at Tonganoxie Creek. Made twenty-five miles and camped in Lawrence, Kansas. Saw a good many old acquaintances, but didn't make myself known.

June 13, [1859](#): Looked for work, but found none. T.L. Whitney handed me a letter from E. R. Chamberland, inquiring for me.

June 14, [1859](#): Have not found work yet. Saw more of my old friends.

June 17, [1859](#): Rained like "fun" last night. Left Lawrence in forenoon and went down to Palmer's. Camped near Santa Fe road, seven miles from Lawrence.

June 19, [1859](#): Packed my things and got ready to travel to look for work.

June 21, [1859](#): Left Prairie City for Osawatomie, a distance of twenty-eight miles. Carried a very heavy carpet sack. I was overtaken by a rain. In Stanton, a woman asked me to stop in



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their house out of the rain, which I did for two hours.

Osawatomie, Kansas

June 23, [1859](#): Osawatomie. Went to work this morning for Tator. Helped to put up the machinery and finish off a flour mill. Pretty hard work. Saw a good deal of gambling here yesterday.

June 26, [1859](#): Sunday. Went to temperance lecture in afternoon.

June 27, [1859](#): A good deal of excitement in town. Many drunken Indians. Had another temperance meeting.

June 30, [1859](#): Have been working a week for Tator.

July 1, [1859](#): I subscribed for the Lawrence Republican for six months.

July 4, [1859](#): Had interesting time. Had a sham battle, and imitation of battle of August 30th, 1856. (Battle John Brown and men fought with Missourians at Osawatomie). In the evening had fireworks.

July 7, [1859](#): Finished second week of work for Tator.

July 11, [1859](#): My trunk came. When I opened it, I found that everything had been wet and was very moldy and mildewed.

July 17, [1859](#): Took a walk this morning to see Fred Brown's grave. (He was one of John Brown's sons who was killed in the battle of Osawatomie). Had on a white shirt and collar for the first time since I left home - April 5th.

July 18, [1859](#): Word came from Lecompton today that Sears lost his claim. Preempted a year ago, but did not file within thirty days so lost claim.

July 19, [1859](#): I heard today that Anthony whipped his wife last night.

July 21, [1859](#): Commenced to board at Tator's at noon. Have been working for him four weeks today.

July 26, [1859](#): The Saloon Keeper took Mrs. Lapsky to court for spilling his liquor. She gave bail for appearance in court.

July 27, [1859](#): Heard from stage driver that Dr. Doy had been liberated by some Lawrence boys.

August 4, [1859](#): Attended a lecture on Phrenology. Had my head examined. Paid fifty cents for a chart.

August 15, [1859](#): A report came that the Missourians had hung a free state man.

September 4, [1859](#): Had a hard shake of ague. Got forty grains of quinine.

September 5, [1859](#): Took twenty grains of quinine. Am very weak.

September 7, [1859](#): Worked all day, but not very smart. Started the flour burrs today, and the first flour ever ground in



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Osawatomie was ground today.

September 13, [1859](#): Run the mill all day. A great many waiting for grists.

September 14, [1859](#): Sibert had the ague today.

September 16, [1859](#): Some Osage Indians are here on their way to Washington. Had a pow-wow in the evening.

September 17, [1859](#): Run the mill all day and half the night.

September 19, [1859](#): Senator J.H. Lane spoke here today, but I was too busy to get to go to hear him.

September 20, [1859](#): Worked all day and all night.

September 21, [1859](#): Slept all forenoon. Mrs. Nichols lectured here this evening on "Women's Rights." I liked her speech very much.

September 24, [1859](#): Did not work. My face is swollen very badly from a toothache.

September 29, [1859](#): Gov. Medary (Kansas was a Territory) stayed in town last night.

October 4, [1859](#): I voted today for the Wyandotte Constitution for the "Homestead Act." There were only two votes cast against it.

October 7, [1859](#): The Republican paper of tonight says, "The Constitution will carry by five thousand." Leavenworth gave a majority. Douglas County gave 900 majority.

October 21, [1859](#): The news came by the Republican that John Brown and son were killed while crossing the river at Harper's Ferry, which they had taken.

October 22, [1859](#): Gen. Lane, Judge Conway, and Col. W.A. Phillips were advertised to speak here, but did not come. (W.A. Phillips of Lawrence who helped lay out the city of Salina, later a resident here. Phillips school and street being named after him).

October 24, [1859](#): Went up to Adair's (John Brown's brother-in-law) to see St. Louis papers. Found that nearly all of the boys were killed. John Brown was wounded in nine places, but not dead yet.

October 27, [1859](#): Did not work. The boilers at the mill leak again.

November 1, [1859](#): Read today about trial of Harper's Ferry prisoners.

November 2, [1859](#): Borrowed a New York Herald in which was part of one of my letters found among John Brown's papers.

November 3, [1859](#): Can get no money from Tator. I would as soon be in prison with Brown as to stay here and wait for money earned



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with a promise of having it every day and every day be disappointed.

November 5, 1859: J.H. Kagi (John Brown man and reporter for National Erie, published in Washington, D.C.) had my gun at Harper's Ferry. No money yet.

November 8, 1859: Considerable excitement over election. I controlled my feelings. Fisher called me a liar and I thumped him.

April 5, Tuesday: Francis Jackson wrote from Boston to friends, in order to introduce Antoinette Brown Blackwell to the Standing Committee of the 28th Congregational Society Friends as a speaker representing the "Pulpit" and "Woman's Rights" at the same time.

Charles Darwin sent the 1st 3 chapters of THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES BY MEANS OF NATURAL SELECTION to his publisher.

In the course of the federal trial of two of the rescuers, one white and one black, the events of the 1858 Oberlin/Wellington Rescue would be summarized in The Daily Cleveland Herald. Simeon M. Bushnell, a white man, and Charles H. Langston, a free black man, were the only two put on trial. What had happened was that after negotiation failed, abolitionist rescuers had stormed the hotel and located John Price where he had been secreted in the hotel's attic. A federal grand jury had initially brought indictments against 25 white men and 12 free blacks in the crowd that had freed Price. Among the free blacks was Charles Henry Langston, who had helped ensure that Price was taken to Canada rather than released to the authorities. Charles and his brother John Mercer Langston were both Oberlin College graduates. The Langston brothers led the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society in 1858. They both were politically active all their lives, Charles in Kansas and John taking leadership roles in state and national politics, in 1888 becoming the first African-American to be elected to the US Congress from Virginia. John H. Scott, a freed slave who had become a harness and trunk maker in Oberlin, Ohio, had also been there. Two other such participants in the rescue, Lewis Sheridan Leary and John Anderson Copeland, Jr., along with Oberlin resident Shields Green who had not participated, would go on to enlist in John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry. On this day the newspaper reported:

The cases of the Rescuers of slave John from his captors ... was called this morning.



April 5, 1859: In running a line through a wood-lot in the southwest part of Lincoln to-day, I started from an old pine stump, now mostly crumbled away, though a part of the wood was still hard above ground, which was described in his deed of 1813 (forty-six years ago) as a pine stump. It was on the side of a hill above Deacon Farrar's meadow.

As I stood on a hill just cut off, I saw, half a dozen rods below, the bright-yellow catkins of a tall willow just opened on the edge of the swamp, against the dark-brown twigs and the withered leaves. This early blossom looks bright and rare amid the withered leaves and the generally brown and dry surface, like the early butterflies. This is the most conspicuous of the March flowers (i.e. if it chances to be so early as March). It suggests unthought-of warmth and sunniness. It takes but little color and tender growth to make miles of dry brown woodland and swamp look habitable and home-like, as if a man could dwell there.

Mr. Haines, who travelled over the lots with us this very cold and blustering day, was over eighty.

"What raw, blustering weather!" said I to my employer to-day. "Yes," answered he. "Did you see those two sun-dogs on Saturday?" They are a pretty sure sign of cold and windy weather.

SUDBURY "HEAVY" HAYNES



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May 10, Tuesday: Sardinia took over the administration of Tuscany.

[John Brown](#) would be in Boston through Thursday, the 2d of June.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR MAY 10th]

May 16, Monday: [John Brown](#) wrote from Boston to his 2d-in-command, [John Henry Kagi](#):

Dear Sir,
I should have acknowledged the receipt of yours of April 21, to Henry Thompson, together with writing-case and papers (all safe, so far as I now see), and also yours of April 27 to me, but for being badly down with the ague, so much so as to disqualify me for everything, nearly. I have been here going on two weeks, and am getting better for two days past; but am very weak. I wish you to say to our folks, all as soon as may be, that there is scarce a doubt but that all will be set right in a very few days more, so that I can be on my way back. They must none of them think I have been slack to try and urge forward a delicate and very difficult matter. I cannot now write you a long letter, being obliged to neglect replying to others, and also to put off some very important correspondence. My reception has been everywhere most cordial and cheering. Your friend in truth,
John Brown

[Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed Edward Damon's farm and factory lot "Damondale."

View [Thoreau](#)'s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)



May 16. Monday. Surveying Damon's farm and factory lot.

Our corydalis was out the 13th. Hear a tanager to-day, and one was seen yesterday. Sand cherry out. Ranunculus abortivus well out (when?), southwest angle of Damon's farm. Hear a bobolink and kingbird, and find sparrows' nests on the ground.

At eve the first spark of a nighthawk.

June 3, Friday: [John Brown](#) left Boston and arrived in Collinsville, Connecticut.

[Sam Houston](#) announced that he would be a candidate for Governor of [Texas](#).



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June 3, Friday: P.M.—Up Assabet.

A large yellow butterfly (somewhat Harris *Papilio Aslerias* like but not *black-winged*) three and a half to four inches in expanse. Pale-yellow, the front wings crossed by three or four black bars; rear, or outer edge, of all wings widely bordered with black, and some yellow behind it; a short black tail to each hind one, with two blue spots in front of two red-brown ones on the tail. [P. Turnus?]

Arenaria lateriflora well out, how long? Common rum cherry out yesterday, how long? *Carex crinita* out a good while. *Carex lanuginosa*, Smith's shore, green fruit. *Carex pallescens*, Smith's shore (higher up bank), green fruit.

Nighthawk, two eggs, fresh. Quail heard.

June 4, Saturday: A joint Franco-Sardinian force defeated the Austrians at Magenta, opening the road to Milan. The victory would so cheer the French that Parisian dressmakers would apply the name of the battle to a new shade of red.

[John Brown](#) reached [New-York](#). He would linger for a week in the Brooklyn home of [Elizabeth A. Parkhill Gloucester](#) and [the Reverend James Newton Gloucester](#).

During the slavery era our church participated vigorously in the Underground Railroad and escaped slaves were provided food, clothing, and refuge. John Brown stopped by the Siloam Presbyterian Church enroute to Harpers Ferry and an offering of approximately \$25 was raised for him to continue his work.



[Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by [Simon Brown](#), [David Heard](#), Samuel H. Rhodes [Rhoades??], and John W. Simonds [Simmons??], about a proposed survey of the Concord River and its bridges and water levels.



June 4, Saturday: P.M.—To Flint's Pond.

Cornus alternifolia well out, apparently three or four days. Yellow-eyed grass, how long? *Poa compressa* not quite out.

June 24, 1859 To Billerica dam, surveying the bridges.

Another foggy [sic], amounting from time to time to a fine rain, and more, even to a shower, though the grass was thickly covered with cobwebs in the morning. Yet it was a condensed fog, I should say. Its value appeared to be as a veil to protect the tender vegetation after the long rainy and cloudy weather.

The 22d, 23d, and 24th, I have been surveying the bridges and river from Heard's Bridge to the Billerica dam. I hear of two places in Wayland where there was formerly what was called a hay bridge, but no causeway, at some narrow and shallow place, a hundred years ago or more. Have looked after all the swift and shallow places also.

The testimony of the farmers, etc., is that the river thirty to fifty years ago was much lower in the summer than now. Deacon Richard Heard spoke of playing when a boy on the river side of the bushes where the pads are, and of wading with great ease at Heard's Bridge, and I hear that one Rice (of Wayland or Sudbury), an old man, remembers galloping his horse through the meadows to the edge of the river. The meadow just above the causeway on the Wayland side was spoken of as particularly valuable. Colonel David Heard, who accompanied me and is best acquainted of any with the details of the controversy, — has worked at clearing out the river (I think about 1820), — said that he did not know of a rock in the river from the falls near the Framingham line to perhaps the rear of Hubbard's in Concord.

THE MEADOW LANDS OF THE CONCORD RIVER VALLEY.
MEETING OF THE PROPRIETORS AT CONCORD.



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It is not generally known throughout the State that thousands of acres of meadow land on the Concord River, from Billerica to Framingham, have been flooded by means of a dam at the former place, so as to seriously damage those lands. The law granting the right of the water power at Billerica was such that the proprietors have ever been unable to obtain redress through the courts. Several cases, growing out of this state of things, have been in litigation for years. The amount of land damaged by these overflows is from ten to fifteen thousand acres, all the way up the river as far as Framingham. The mill proprietors brought a suit against the city of Boston for diverting a part of the Concord river from its natural course, and reservoirs were built above from which water was sent down when needed. This usually happens in the haying season, and is another great source of damage to the owners of the meadows.

Recently an attempt to unite all the interests upon some plan for redress has been made. A preliminary meeting was held some weeks ago, and a committee was then appointed to consider the matter and report something definite.

A meeting was held December 27th, at the Town Hall, in Concord. About two hundred farmers were present, though this is but a small part of the number interested in the lands. The mill privilege at Billerica is now owned by Mr. Talbot, and he was present, accompanied by his counsel, but took no part in the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at one o'clock by Simon Brown, Esq., of Concord, and, on motion of Samuel H. Rhoades, Esq., of Concord, a committee was appointed to report a list of officers for permanent organization. Simon Brown was chosen President, Col. David Heard, of Wayland, and seven others, Vice-Presidents, and Mr. R.F. Fuller, of Wayland, and Dr. Joseph Reynolds, of Concord, Secretaries.

Mr. Brown opened the question with a clear statement of the position of the proprietors of those meadow lands. He said the first settlers in this town and vicinity had been attracted by its beautiful river and the fine meadows skirting it, which were a yearly source of wealth to the inhabitants. He said they came here to devise some means of obtaining redress. All they wanted was justice, and they came together with the kindest feelings towards every man. He urged those who had an interest in this matter to organize — to take a stand, and raise their colors and nail them to the mast. (Applause.)

Col. David Heard, of Wayland, said he was glad to see so many interested in a question in which he had been working for forty years. Some young men, he said, had run into the idea that these meadow lands were never valuable, but he knew better. He found in an old Assessors' book of the town of Wayland that that town assessed taxes on 1200 acres of meadow. Some of these lands had come into his possession at the rate of \$75 an acre. These lands, he said, had been stolen inch by inch, under the law, if it could be called law, which had kept them out of their just dues. He said he had been entrusted with much responsibility in the law suits that had been carried on, and he had no doubt but he might have raised a company at any time to have torn down the dam, and allowed the owner to sue for damages. But the people had forborne continually through their defeat. He said he was determined to continue the suit as long as he had the means. Besides this, the Cochituate reservoirs were let loose in haying time, when the water was low, and this did serious damage. In fact, he said, they had a dam at both ends, and a curse between them.

Mr. Brown, the chairman, added a few remarks, in regard to the damage done to lands owned by him. Rich and fertile bottom lands were rendered nearly valueless.

The committee, appointed at a previous meeting, reported the following series of resolutions, upon which remarks were invited:

Whereas, it is believed by many owners of land upon the Concord River and its tributaries, that their lands have been of late much more injured than formerly by inundations caused by obstructions, by dams or otherwise, and by retaining the waters in reservoirs and suddenly releasing them in the warm season;

And, whereas, in various other parts of the Commonwealth, as well as in this country, great destruction of crops, and great injury to health, is produced by interference with the natural flow of our streams and rivers, whereby the drainage and cultivation of vast tracts of most valuable lands are prevented;

And, whereas, it is believed that the peace of the community, and the security of land and mill owners, and the interests of agriculture, would be promoted by carefully ascertaining and defining, and by publishing by record or otherwise, the legal height of all dams, or other obstructions, on all our streams and rivers, and of all privileges, limitations and restrictions incident thereto; therefore,

Resolved, That a Committee be raised to investigate and report at a future meeting what dams or other obstructions are maintained on the Concord River or its tributaries, and whether any of said obstructions are illegal, giving such information as may be obtained of the claims, legal and illegal, of mill owners and others who maintain them.



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2. That it is expedient that an act of the Legislature be passed, to provide for defining and recording the height of all dams and other obstructions on all streams and rivers in the Commonwealth, and of all privileges, limitations and restrictions incident thereto.
3. That the interests of agriculture require that provision be made by law, so that in proper cases dams and other obstructions to the natural flow of the water may be removed or lowered, or restricted in their use as to the season of the year or otherwise, upon just compensation to be paid by the parties benefited to those injured by such proceedings.
4. That this meeting are determined fully to investigate the complaints of land-owners on the Concord River and its tributaries, and to persevere by all lawful means to protect the rights of land owners, the health of the community, and the interests of agriculture, against all illegal encroachments of those who control the dams and other obstructions thereon; and further, to procure such legislation as may be necessary to relieve our most valuable lands of the curse of a second deluge, whether caused by legal or illegal obstructions.

The following resolution was afterwards added, on motion of Mr. R.F. Fuller, of Wayland:

Whereas, The special remedy prescribed by the statute for the flowage of lands on the Concord River by the proprietors of the Middlesex Canal has been in such a form and so limited in point of time, under the construction which has been given to it by the Supreme Judicial Court, as practically to furnish no remedy whatever; therefore,

Resolved, That adequate remedies should be provided by the Legislature for injuries to land-owner on the Concord River and its tributaries for the damage annually done by the flowage of their lands, and furnishing, as the general mill acts do, compensation year by year for the annual injury to the land and the crops.

Mr. R.F. Fuller, of Wayland, said he was one of the meadow proprietors, and he sympathized entirely in the spirit of the resolutions, as he presumed every man who owned any of the meadow land would. He believed that the only redress to be had was from the General Court. The courts could not award justice unless the law allowed it, and in this case the law-makers had been at fault. The act giving leave to build the canal provided that any one receiving damage thereby should sue within one year and in the Court of Sessions. That court was abolished about the time the act was passed, and the Supreme Court had held that in the above provision the damage referred to the "source of the damage," which in this case was the building of the dam. Under the present laws no redress could be had.

Dr. Joseph Reynolds, of Concord, read from a work descriptive of Middlesex county, as it was when first settled, and for years afterwards, showing the wealth of meadow land then existing. He presumed that the meadows on the river now were not worth more than half as much as they were forty years ago, or possibly twenty-five years ago. He said thousands were suffering from this evil, which was continually increasing, and it was only to favor a very few.

Col. Heard said there was one consideration not yet touched upon. The stagnant waters had already shown their pernicious effects upon the atmosphere; and farms finely situated in Wayland had been sold at one-third their former price, on this account. These, he declared, were by no means rare cases.

Mr. Barker, of Weston, corroborated the remarks of previous speakers. He owned a meadow which was uncommonly high, and he had thought that it could never be damaged by water. But for the last few years his meadow had been worse than worthless. He had paid taxes and received no income.

Mr. Heard, of Wayland, said he did not own an acre of meadow land, but he was interested, and so was every person who lived on the banks of the Concord river. If the evil should be allowed to continue, the inhabitants would be driven back from the river banks. The stench from the river was sometimes very bad. He looked upon it as a nuisance; and he hoped it would be removed one way or another. He would advocate the matter sanctioned by Judge Shaw of removing a nuisance. (Applause.)

The Chairman said if this was anything but a meeting of farmers, there would be fifty present charged full to bursting with speeches. Here were men who had suffered damages for half a century, and they would not be heard from. He would introduce a gentleman and a lawyer, from another State, who, he said, had probably tried more cases of flowage than any other man in New England. He introduced Judge French, of New Hampshire.

Judge French said he was not present to take any part in this local question, but he stated some valuable facts from his experience. He said he believed, and he had said so many times before, that the amount of meadow



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land overflowed by the dams of manufacturing companies would raise wood enough ten times over to carry those mills by steam. He advised the proprietors of these meadow lands to ask the Legislature to give them a law, if they had none adequate, under which this dam may be lowered, or, if necessary, entirely removed, and a compensation made to the proprietors of the dam. He had no doubt that the Massachusetts General Court would give such a law, when the circumstances were known. Massachusetts had, in 1855, passed the best drainage law in the world; by which a man was given power to drain through any adjacent lands. He believed this was, in spirit, fully up to such an act as was wanted. In England, where a large territory had been overflowed, the evil had been removed by an act of Parliament, by which the proprietors had been compensated in a degree sufficient to support a steam power equal to the water power taken from them, and the streams were allowed to go free as God had intended they should.

Mr. Abel Gleason, of Wayland, made some remarks, mostly corroborative of the other speakers. He spoke of the inconvenience and damage from the waters sent down from the Cochituate reservoirs above, during the haying season.

Col. Heard said he knew that the whole fall of the river from Wayland to Billerica, twenty-two miles, was only two feet; but he believed, in common with several other speakers, that the water in the river at this point was several feet higher than it was at the dam in Billerica.

Deacon Heard, from Wayland, made some remarks upon the effects of the dam.

Judge French, being requested, explained that, by the law that made water run down hill, the surface of the water must be somewhat descending; and that it was very natural that the water should be piled up higher twenty miles back than at the dam.

The resolutions were then passed without any opposition.

Mr. Samuel H. Rhoades moved that the officers of this meeting, and such persons as the meeting might add, be appointed an Executive Committee to strengthen, perfect and continue this organization, and to raise such funds as may be necessary to secure its objects. The committee was raised as follows:

Simon Brown, of Concord, President; Col. David Heard, of Wayland, Elijah Wood, Jr., of Concord, John Eaton, of Sudbury, Jonas Smith, of Lincoln, Jonathan Hill, of Billerica, Nathan O. Reed, of Bedford, Thomas Page, of Carlisle, Charles Fisk, of Framingham, Vice Presidents; R.F. Fuller, of Wayland, Dr. Joseph Reynolds, of Concord, Secretaries, and Samuel H. Rhoades, of Concord, Treasurer. To whom were added Nathan Barker, of Weston, and Thomas J. Damon, of Wayland.

After some further remarks, in which no new facts were elicited, the meeting dissolved.

It was estimated by several of the speakers that the amount of property damaged — much of it rendered valueless — was as much as a million dollars. — Boston Journal.



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June 5, Sunday: Orphée aux enfers by Jacques Offenbach ended its initial run of 228 performances at the Bouffes-Parisiens. It might have continued but Offenbach had decided to grant his performers, who were pretty much exhausted, a rest.

[Waldo Emerson](#) subscribed \$5.⁰⁰ to a fund for [Harriet Tubman](#) the slave stealer, and why not? In her peculiar way, **she was getting rid of our black people**, and didn't all Americans want to rid themselves of the black people?⁶¹

On this day and the following one, [John Brown](#) would be in [New-York](#).

In Boston, the Reverend [William Rounseville Alger](#) delivered an discourse entitled "Lessons for mankind, from the life and death of Humboldt" at the Bulfinch Street Church. (This would soon be published in Cambridge by Welch, Bigelow, and Company as Pamphlet #7 in a series on [Louis Agassiz](#), entitled LESSONS FOR MANKIND, FROM THE LIFE AND DEATH OF [HUMBOLDT](#), A DISCOURSE, DELIVERED IN THE BULFINCH STREET CHURCH, JUNE 5, 1859. BY WILLIAM ROUNSEVILLE ALGER.)



June 5, Sunday: P.M. – To Ball's Hill.

Cat-briar in flower, how long? Allium not out.

See several ducks, I think both summer and black.

A yellowbird's nest; four eggs, developed. Pigeon woodpecker's nest in a hollow black willow over river; six eggs, almost hatched.

The new white maple leaves look reddish, and at a distance brown, as if they had not put out yet.

June 7, Tuesday: Italie, a cantata by Fromental Halévy to words of Saint-Georges, was performed for the initial time, at the Opéra-Comique, Paris. This was part of 3 days of festivities celebrating the French victory in Italy.

[Captain John Brown](#) had departed from [New-York](#) and arrived at Troy, [New York](#). The Brooklyn [Eagle](#) would report the final conversation with [Elizabeth A. Parkhill Gloucester](#) before he departed from the Gloucester home in Brooklyn for his agenda at [Harpers Ferry](#):

Brown said, "Goodbye, Sister Gloucester. I've only sixteen men, but I'm to conquer." Mrs. Gloucester said to him, "Perhaps you will lose your life." "Well, my life," he replied, "is not worth much. I'm an old man. In Kansas, the balls flew around my head as thick as hail. I'll never be killed by a ball. If I fall, I'll open a ball in this country that will never stop until every slave is free." John Brown left New York, went to Harper's [sic]

61. I have seen allegations that Tubman made two appearances in Concord, and spoke also in Framingham, Massachusetts. Although it was alleged by Franklin Benjamin Sanborn that "She has often been in Concord, where she resided at the houses of Emerson, Alcott, the Whitneys, the Brooks Family, Mrs. Horace Mann, and other well known persons," I doubt very much that any person of color would have been allowed to set foot inside the Emerson home, even as a servant, at any point during the lifetime of Waldo Emerson, as he was well known as "a Negrophobe," so I will here confine myself to the comment that I have as yet been unable to uncover any shred of evidence that any of portion of this allegation by Sanborn was true. All I have been able to ascertain doesn't amount to a whole lot — that 1.) Sanford alleged she once entered his home in Concord after the hanging of Captain John Brown, and 2.) she encountered Ednah Dow Cheney once in Boston either inside some building or on the street.



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Ferry, and on into the history books.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JUNE 7th]

June 9, Thursday: [John Brown](#) was at [Keene](#), New Hampshire.

At Nacogdoches, [Texas](#), [Sam Houston](#) made the only campaign speech of the gubernatorial election.

Ferdinand de Lesseps ignored the [Egyptian](#) government's order to cease work on the [Suez Canal](#).

A provisional Sardinian government for Lombardy was constituted.

[Bronson Alcott](#) noted in his journal that he had had [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), [Henry Thoreau](#), and [William Allen](#) over for tea (JOURNALS. Boston: Little, Brown, 1938, page 317):

Sanborn, Henry Thoreau, and Allen take tea and pass the evening with us. We discuss questions of philosophy and the Ideal Theory as applied to education. Thoreau is large always and masterly in his own wild ways. With a firmer grasp of the shows of Nature, he has a subtler sense of the essence and personality of the flowing life of things than most men, and he defended the Ideal Theory and Personal Identity to my great delight.



June 9, Thursday: A boy shows me one of three (apparent) hen-hawk's eggs, fresh, obtained on the 6th from a pine near Breed's house site.

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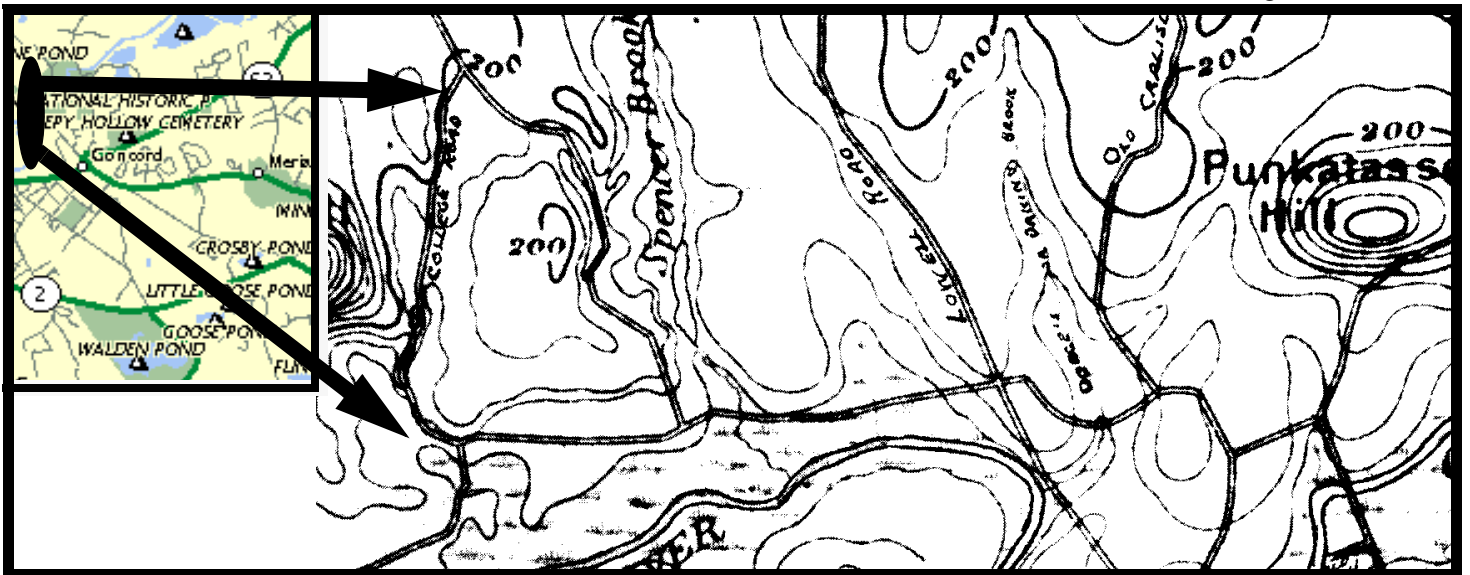
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June 10, Friday: [John Brown](#) was at Westport, Connecticut.

Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky graduated from the School of Jurisprudence at St. Petersburg, Russia.

C.F. Bernard wrote to Charles Wesley Slack to request the distribution of a report. He praised the 28th Congregational Society and the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), and sent well wishes.

[Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed on College Road below Annursnack Hill near the Acton town line, for Daniel Brooks Clark, and was informed that the road had received that name due to “a house so called once standing on it”:



He also surveyed 16 acres near Prescott Barrett’s house on Barrett’s Mill Road west of Spencer Brook. Thoreau remarked that the whole area had belonged to Peter Temple in 1811, and part was sold to Jonathan Hildreth and part to Stephen Barrett. The List of Bills in the FIELD NOTES shows a bill for \$2.⁵⁰ for this date.



http://www.concordlibrary.org/collect/Thoreau_surveys/4.htm



June 10, Friday: Surveying for D. B. Clark on “College Road,” so called in Peter Temple’s deed in 1811, Clark thought from a house so called once standing on it. Cut a line, and after measured it, in a thick wood, which passed within two feet of a blue jay’s nest which was about four feet up a birch, beneath the leafy branches and quite exposed. The bird sat perfectly still with its head up and bill open upon its pretty large young, not moving in the least, while we drove a stake close by, within three feet, and cut and measured, being about

there twenty minutes at least.

June 16, Thursday: Probably, at this point, [John Brown](#) was leaving the family farm at [North Elba](#), New York for the final time (except of course that the corpse would be brought back there for interment).



Flag Officer William Inman of the new USS *Constellation* frigate reported: “Sir, I have the honor to report that I have, this day, hoisted my Flag on board this Ship as directed by you Order of the 3rd Ultimo.”



June 16. P. M.– Paddle to Great Meadows.

Small snapdragon, how long?

Examined a kingfisher’s nest, –though there is a slight doubt if I found the spot. It was formed singularly like that of the bank swallow, i.e. flat-elliptical, thus:

[Thoreau’s sketch to be scanned]

some eight inches, as I remember, in the largest diameter, and located just like a swallow’s, in a sand-bank, some twenty inches below the surface. Could feel nothing in it, but it may have been removed. Have an egg from this. Walked into the Great Meadows from the angle on the west side of the Holt, in order to see what were the prevailing sedges, etc.

On the dry and hard bank by the river, grows June-grass, etc., *Carex scoparia*, *stellulata*, *stricta*, and *Bux baumii*; in the wet parts, pipes two and a half feet high, *C. lanuginosa*, *C. bullata* (?), [*C.*] *monile*, *Eleocharis palustris*, *Panicum virgatum* [Blue-joint] (a little just begins to show itself), and *Glyceria fluitans* here and there and out. There was a noble sea of pipes, –you may say pipes exclusively, –a rich dark green, quite distinct from the rest of the meadow and visible afar, a broad stream of this valuable grass growing densely, two and a half feet high in water. Next to this, south, where it was quite as wet, or wetter, grew the tall and slender *C. lanuginosa*, the prevailing sedge in the wetter parts where I walked. This was a sheeny glaucous green, bounding the pipes on each side, of a dry look. Next in abundance in the wet parts were the inflated sedges above named.⁶²

Those pipes, in such a mass, are, methinks, the richest mass of uniform dark liquid green now to be seen on the surface of the town [?]. You might call this meadow the “Green Sea.”

62. Vide July 7th, '59, also June 22d, '60.



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Phalaris Americana, Canary grass, just out. The island by Hunt's Bridge is densely covered with it. Saw, in the midst of the Great Meadows, the trails or canals of the musquash running an indefinite distance, now open canals full of water, in which ever minnows dart constantly, deep under the grass; and here and there you come to the stool of a musquash, where it has flatted down the tufts of sedge and perhaps gnawed them off.

June 18, Saturday: [John Brown](#) was at West Andover, Ohio.

Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston replaced Edward Geoffrey Stanley, Earl of Derby as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.



June 18. P.M.— Sail up river.

Rain again, and we take shelter under a bridge, and again under our boat, and again under a pine tree. It is worth the while to sit or lie through a shower thus under a bridge or under a boat on the bank, because the rain is a much more interesting and remarkable phenomenon under these circumstances. The surface of the stream betrays every drop from the first to the last, and all the variations of the storm, so much more expressive is the water than the comparatively brutish face of earth. We no doubt often walk between drops of rain falling thinly, without knowing it, though if on the water we should have been advertised of it. At last the whole surface is nicked with the rebounding drops as if the surface rose in little cones to accompany or meet the drops, till it looks like the back of some spiny fruit or animal, and yet the different-colored currents, light and dark, are seen through it all; and then, when it clears up, how gradually the surface of the water becomes more placid and bright, the dimples growing fewer and finer till the prolonged reflections of trees are seen in it, and the water is lit up with a joy which is in sympathy with our own, while the earth is comparatively dead. I saw swarms of little gnats, light-winged, dancing over the water in the midst of the rain, though you would say any drop would end one's days.

The swamp white oaks and red maples and willows, etc., now first begin to show a slight silveriness on the under edges of their flakes, where the under sides of the new leaves are shown.

June 19, Sunday: [John Brown](#) left West Andover, Ohio.



June 19. Sunday. P.M.— To Heywood Meadow and Well Meadow.

In Stow's meadow by railroad, Scirpus Eriophorum, with blackish bracts, not long out. A flying squirrel's nest and young on Emerson's hatchet path, south of Walden, on hilltop, in a covered hollow in a small old stump at base of a young oak, covered with fallen leaves and a portion of the stump; nest apparently of dry grass. Saw three young run out after the mother and up a slender oak. The young half-grown, very tender-looking and weak-tailed, yet one climbed quite to the top of an oak twenty-five feet high, though feebly. Claws must be very sharp and early developed. The mother rested quite near, on a small projecting stub big as a pipe-stem, curled cross-wise on it. Have a more rounded head and snout than our other squirrels. The young in danger of being picked off by hawks.

Find by Baker Rock the (apparently) Carex Muhlenbergii gone to seed, dark-green, as Torrey says. Resembles the stipata.

Blackbirds nest in the small pond there, and generally in similar weedy and bushy pond-holes in woods.

The prevailing sedge of Heywood Meadow by Bartlett Hill-side, that which showed yellow tops in the spring, is the Carex stricta. On this the musquash there commonly makes its stools. A tall slender sedge with conspicuous brown staminate spikes. Also some C. lanuginosa with it. C. canescens, too, grows there, less conspicuous, like the others gone to seed.

Scare up young partridges; size of chickens just hatched, yet they fly. The old one in the woods near makes a chuckling sound just like a red squirrel's bark, also mewing.

Flies rain about my head.

Notice green berries,—blueberries and huckleberries.

Is that red-top, nearly out on railroad bank? Eriophorum polystachyon of Torrey, Bigelow, and Gray, the apparently broadish-leaved, but Gray makes the wool too long. In Pleasant and Well Meadow; at height.



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Carex polytrichoides in fruit and a little in flower, Heywood Meadow in woods and Spanish Meadow Swamp. Trisetum palustre (?), Well Meadow Head, in wet; apparently at height.

June 23, Thursday: [John Brown](#) traveled through Akron, Ohio and Pittsburg, Pennsylvania to Bedford Springs. He would remain in Bedford Springs until Monday, June 27th.



June 23. Ride to Wayland, surveying the bridges.

Veiny-leaved hawkweed freshly out.

At Heard's Bridge the white maple is the prevailing one, and I do not notice a red one there nor at Bridle Point Bridge. I think I saw the white as far down as the Sudbury causeway. [The next day saw the white maple and hibiscus in Billerica on the river,—the maple at least as far down as the falls.]

A foggy, Cape-Cod day, with an easterly wind.

June 27, Monday: [John Brown](#) relocated from Bedford Springs, Pennsylvania to Chambersburg, where he would remain until Thursday, June 30th.

A culvert collapsed beneath a railroad train in the rain, on the [Michigan Southern Railroad](#) near South Bend, Indiana. A number of passengers drowned (estimates range from 41 to 70).



June 27. I find that the tops of my stakes in Moore's Swamp are nearly two feet lower than a fortnight ago, or when Garfield began to fill it.

P. M.—To Walden.

At the further Brister's Spring, under the pine, I find an Attacus luna, half hidden under a skunk-cabbage leaf, with its back to the ground and motionless, on the edge of the swamp. The under side is a particularly pale hoary green. It is somewhat greener above with a slightly purplish brown border on the front edge of its front wings, and a brown, yellow, and whitish eye-spot in the middle of each wing. It is very sluggish and allows me to turn it over and cover it up with another leaf,—sleeping till the night come. It has more relation to the moon by its pale hoary-green color and its sluggishness by day than by the form of its tail. A frail creature, rarely met with, though not uncommon.

June 30, Thursday: [John Brown](#) left Chambersburg, Pennsylvania and would spend the night at Hagerstown.

“The Great Blondin” (Jean-François Gravelet) strolled across the gorge of the [Niagara](#) on a 3-inch 1,100-foot manila tightrope, stretched from what is now Prospect Park in [Niagara Falls](#), New York to what is now Oakes Garden in Niagara Falls, Ontario (note, he was not above the falls themselves). He made use of a 30-foot balancing pole weighing 40 pounds. This stroll began on the American side and required 20 minutes in view of about 25,000 people (that summer he would take such a stroll 8 additional times).

Antonin Dvořák graduated from the Prague Organ School.



June 30: Cooler, with a northerly wind. The pads blown up by it already show crimson, it is so strong, but this not a fall phenomenon yet.



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Summer or Fall: [Nahum Ball Onthank](#) painted a portrait of “Captain” [John Brown](#) of Osawatomic, with beard, on the basis of a Daguerreotype that had been brought to his studio by Dr. Thomas Webb in the company of Brown himself.



By my estimation of Brown’s movements during this eventful year, the last day on which this visit to the Boston studio might have been made would have been June 2d. The painting in question can now be viewed at the Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History at the New York Historical Society.

July 3, Sunday: [John Brown](#) relocated from Hagerstown, Pennsylvania and was at Sandy Hook, Maryland, near [Harpers Ferry](#). He rented a farmhouse using the name “Isaac Smith.”

[Bronson Alcott](#) wrote about [Henry Thoreau](#) in his journal (JOURNALS. Boston MA: Little, Brown, 1938, page 318):

Thoreau comes and stays an hour or two. Students of Nature alike, our methods differ. He is an observer of Nature pure, and I discern her as exalted and mingled in Man. Her brute aspects and qualities interest him, and these he discriminates with a sagacity unsurpassed. He is less thinker than observer; a naturalist in tendency but of a mystic habit, and a genius for detecting the essence in the form and giving forth the soul of things seen. He knows more of Nature’s secrets than any man I have known, and of Man as related to Nature. He thinks and sees for himself in way eminently original, and is formidably individual and persistent.



July 3: P.M. To Hubbard’s Grove.

You see in rich moist mowing the yet slender, recurving unexpanded panicles or heads of the red-top (?), mixed with the upright, rigid herd’s-grass. Much of it is out in dry places. *Glyceria fluitans* is very abundant in Depot Field Brook. *Hypeticum ellipticum* out.

I noticed the other day, I think the 30th, a large patch of *Agrostis scabra* in E. Hosmer’s meadow,—the firmer ridges,—a very interesting purple with its fine waving top, mixed with blue-eyed grass.

The *Mitchella repens* [Partridgeberry *Mitchella repens*], so abundant now in the northwest part of Hubbard’s Grove, emits a strong astringent cherry-like scent as I walk over it, now that it is so abundantly in bloom, which



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is agreeable to me,—spotting the ground with its downy-looking white flowers.

Eleocharis obtusa and *acicularis* are now apparently in prime at water's edge by Hubbard's Grove bridge path.

Also *Juncus bufonius* is very abundant in path there, fresh quite, though some shows seed. *Juncus tenuis*, though quite fresh, is also as much gone to seed.



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July 12, Tuesday: [Martin Robison Delany](#) arrived in Monrovia 300 miles from Cape Palmas to the west.



William Goodale of Massachusetts patented a machine for the manufacture of paper bags.⁶³

On approximately this date [John Brown](#) was moving to the Kennedy farm near [Harpers Ferry](#) (one of the

63. This was not the grocery bag familiar to us from our childhoods, but an earlier and somewhat less cost-effective version. That square-bottomed design would not be invented until 1870, by Luther Childs Crowell.

HDT

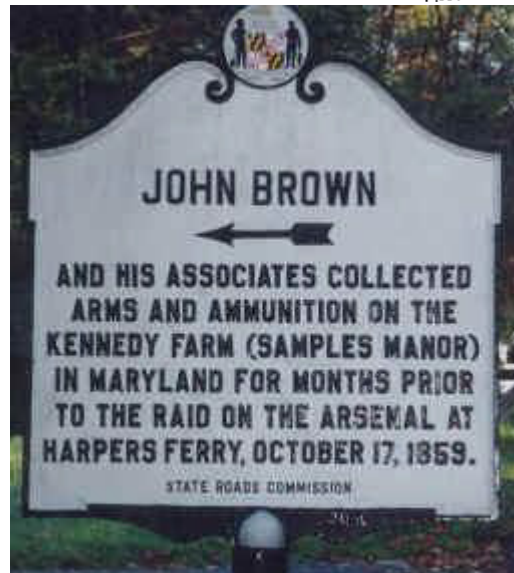
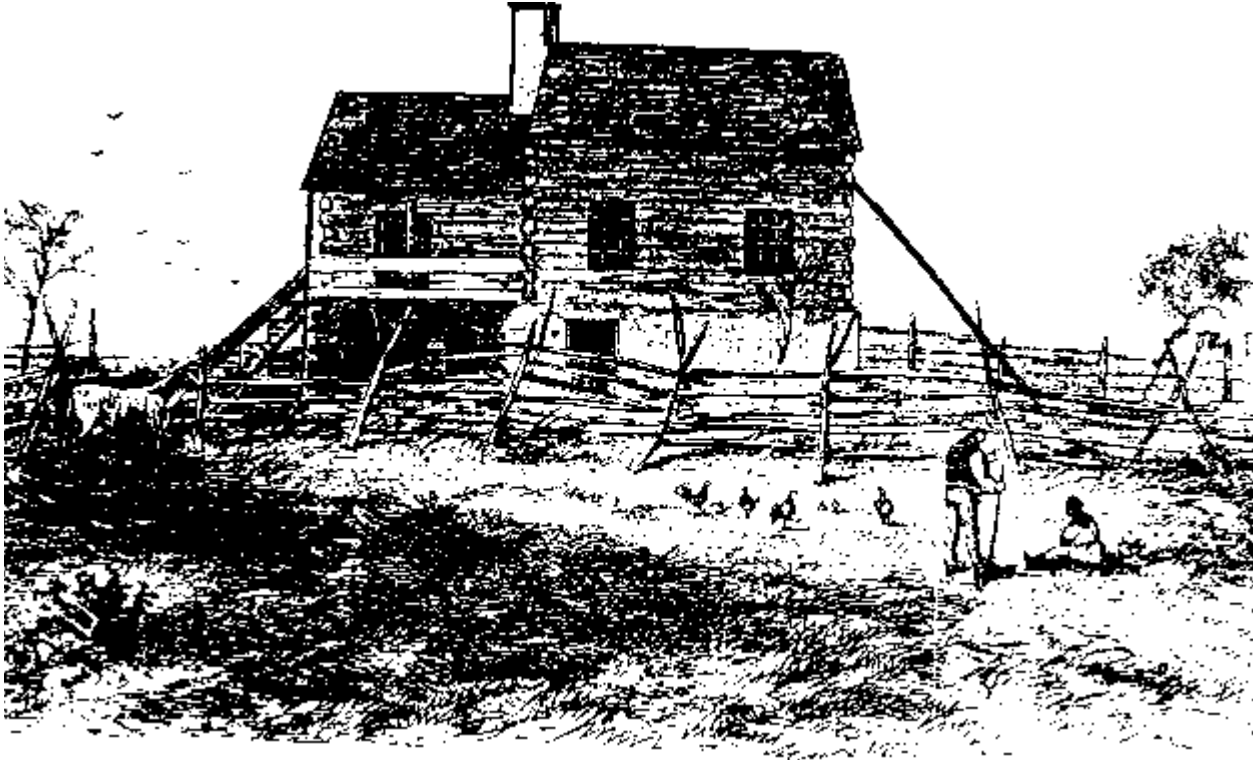
WHAT?

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conspirators had married a local woman named Kennedy).





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The Kennedy farmhouse was about 5 miles outside the town, in Maryland. He positioned his 15-year-old daughter [Anne Brown](#) and his 17-year-old daughter-in-law [Martha Brewster Brown](#) in the farmhouse, providing it a familial appearance in the eyes of neighbors. He obliged his raiders to remain hidden in the loft during the hours of daylight, allowing them downstairs at night when no-one would be expected to approach the premises.

Using the alias “Isaac Smith,” [John Brown](#) wrote from this hideout to [John H. Kagi](#): “Please mail enclosed letter at Chambersburg; by first opportunity. Also please write [Charles Moffett](#) as well as [Tidd](#); to come on to Chambersburg, as I think we shall be ready for them as soon as they get on....”



July 12: Another hot day. 96° at mid-afternoon.

P.M. – To Assabet Bath.

The elm avenue above the Wheeler farm is one of the hottest places in the town; the heat is reflected from the dusty road. The grass by the roadside begins to have a dry, hot, dusty look. The melted ice is running almost in a stream from the countryman’s covered wagon, containing butter, which is to be conveyed hard to Boston market. He stands on the wheel to relieve his horses at each shelf in the ascent of Colburn Hill.

I think I have distinguished our eriophorums now. There is the *E. vaginatum*, the earliest, out long ago; the *E. polystachyon*, well out June 19th; and to-day I see the *E. gracile*, which apparently has not been out quite so long as the last. Its leaves are channelled triangular. Saw yesterday the *E. Virginicum*, apparently in bloom, though very little woolly or reddish as yet, –a dense head.

The taller dark rhynchospora is well out.



In the evening, the moon being about full, I paddle up the river to see the moonlight and hear the bullfrogs. The toads and the pebbly *dont dont* are most common. There are fireworks in the village, –rockets, blue lights, etc. I am so far off that I do not hear the rush of the rocket till it has reached its highest point, so that it seems to be produced there. So the villagers entertain themselves this warm evening. Such are the[IR] aspirations.

I see at 9.30 P.M. a little brood of four or five barn swallows, which have quite recently left the nest, perched close together for the night on a dead willow twig in the shade of the tree, about four feet above the water. Their tails not yet much grown. When I passed up, the old bird twittered about them in alarm. I now float within four feet, and they do not move or give sign of awaking. I could take them all off with my hand. They have been hatched in the nearest barn or elsewhere, and have been led at once to roost here, for coolness and security. There is no cooler nor safer place for them. I observe that they take their broods to the telegraph-wire for an aerial perch, where they teach them to fly. They have gone to their beach.

2d week of August: [John Brown, Jr.](#) traveled from Ohio to Syracuse, New York in order to invite [Frederick Douglass](#) to a secret rendezvous with his father in an abandoned stone quarry near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, 50-odd miles to the north of [Harpers Ferry](#), and to pass him \$22 to cover the costs of this journey. Douglass brought with him a bodyguard, [Shields Green](#), who had already met [John Brown](#) at Douglass’s home in January. When Douglass and his bodyguard were guided to the quarry by their escort, the local barber [Henry Watson](#), they found Captain Brown at a vantage point on a ledge halfway up the high rock wall where he could detect all approaching from a distance and verify that they were alone, with a rifle across his legs. The retreating admissions which were made in regard to this meeting, at a later date while culpability was being examined, were that although this was not the first Douglass had ever heard of the plan to start a race war, it was definitely the 1st he had heard that he was being selected as the black general who was to lead it. According to these retreating admissions, what Brown said was to the effect:

Come with me, Douglass. I want you for a special purpose. When I strike, the bees will begin to swarm, and I shall want you to help hive them.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

According to these retreating admissions made after the fact,

Douglass, however, stood by his previously voiced reservations about Brown's plan. Brown, Douglass was convinced, was doomed to both political and personal failure. Armed attack on the federal government would, argued Douglass, be a disaster. It would array the entire country against the abolition movement. His purpose in meeting Brown was not to allow himself to be recruited, but rather to try one last time to dissuade Brown from a course that would bode well for no one. Douglass said Harpers Ferry was a "perfect steel-trap." "You will never get out alive," Douglass told Brown. Virginia would blow him and any hostages he might take sky-high, rather than he should hold Harpers Ferry one hour. Just as he had several months earlier, Brown shrugged off Douglass's doubts. Douglass left Brown in the quarry with his delusion of divinely assured success. He also left him with another soldier: Shields Green."⁶⁴

Of course, this is not in any way similar to my own reading of what was going down in that meeting in the quarry. My own reading of what was going down was that [Frederick Douglass](#), who had been fomenting this entire affair ever since his meeting with [Waldo Emerson](#) in 1844, had been trying to make himself the Toussaint L'Ouverture of the North American continent ever since August of 1844 in Concord, was finally deciding that he needed to bail out of his own scheme and leave his fanatical white supporter [John Brown](#) to hold the bag and face the consequences. The reason for leaving his bodyguard [Shields Green](#) with the guerrilla force, at risk, would have been simply to continue to have intelligence of what this group was up to after he had cut himself loose from his creation.⁶⁵

64. Renehan, Edward J., Jr. THE SECRET SIX: THE TRUE TALE OF THE MEN WHO CONSPIRED WITH JOHN BROWN. NY: Crown Publishers, 1995, page 190. This is a modest work of investigative reporting, not what you would consider a peer-vetted scholarly monograph. For instance, Renehan describes the Civil War refrain "John Brown's Body" as "the marching song that commemorated Brown's bloody heroics" (actually it commemorated a diminutive NCO who drowned at a river crossing), indicates that the frontier territory of Kansas had "flower mills" (next door to the florist's shop?), depicts one of the conspirators as traveling to the island of "Santa Cruz" in the Caribbean (Saint Croix), has [Henry Thoreau](#) driving a carriage owned by [Waldo Emerson](#) in the evening rather than a covered wagon rented by Emerson in the morning, etc. Throughout, this book presumes that whenever one of these detected co-conspirators has made one or another retreating admission while under judicial challenge, that retreating admission needs to be regarded now as nothing less than the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Throughout, also, and more egregiously, this book presumes in accordance with 19th-Century conventions that only white men can instigate plots, and that [Frederick Douglass](#), rather than being the real leader and instigator of the entire scheme to create a race war, was merely the black boy which instigator [John Brown](#) was seeking to bring onto the stage at the last moment to hold aloft George Washington's sword.

65. Joel Silbey has contended, in "The Civil War Synthesis in American History," that postbellum American historians have been misconstruing antebellum American politics by viewing them in conjunction with our knowledge of the bloodbath that followed. It is only after the fact that we can "know" that the US Civil War amounted to a sectional dispute, North versus South. We avoid learning that before the fact, it was undecided whether this conflict was going to shape up as a race conflict, a class conflict, or a sectional conflict. We avoid knowing that the raid on Harpers Ferry might have resulted in a race war, in which peoples of color would be exterminated in order to create an all-white America, or might have resulted in a class war, in which the laboring classes might have first destroyed the plantation owners' equity by killing his slaves, and then gone on to purge the nation of the white plantation owners themselves, with their privileged-class endowments.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

August 16, Tuesday to August 21, Sunday: The Hanover Minister for Internal Affairs placed Heinrich August Marschner on its list of retired civil servants (this was Marschner's 64th birthday).

Exiled Grand Duke of Tuscany Ferdinando IV was formally removed from power.

In Africa, [Martin Robison Delany](#) was returning to Cape Palmas to explore the Cavalla River.



The [emancipation](#) paper of Elias Watkins Napier, in Connecticut:

The said Elias Watkins Napier is ten years of age. A light colored mulatto, with straight dark brown hair. Has a slight scar just over, and partly in his left eye brow, and a small dark mole under his left jaw, and has had the end of his middle finger and the end of his fourth finger on his left hand crushed, so that the nail has come off. He has no other special marks at this time. The said Elias Watkins Napier has heretofore owed service or labor to me, under the laws of the State of Tennessee, as a slave....

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While in Chambersburg near [Harpers Ferry](#) as agent for the raiders, [John Brown](#)'s 2d-in-command, [John Henry Kagi](#), had been boarding with a Mrs. Mary Rittner. In this period Captain Brown met secretly at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania with [Frederick Douglass](#). The meeting was staged in an abandoned stone quarry.



One of these persons at that quarry was the head of a general conspiracy, and the other was acting as one of its



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agents: how can we now establish which was which?

Two weeks prior to the mediated attack, Capt. Brown summoned me to meet him in an old stone quarry on the Conocochequi river, near the town of Chambersburgh, Penn. His arms and ammunition were stored in that town and were to be moved on to Harpers Ferry. In company with Shields Green I obeyed the summons, and prompt to the hour we met the dear old man, with Kagi, his secretary, at the appointed place. Our meeting was in some sense a council of war. We spent the Saturday and succeeding Sunday in conference on the question, whether the desperate step should then taken, or the old plan as already described should be carried out. He was for boldly striking Harpers Ferry at once and running the risk of getting into the mountains afterwards. I was for avoiding Harpers Ferry altogether. Shields Green and Mr. Kagi remained silent listeners throughout. It is needless to repeat here what was said, after what has happened. Suffice it, that after all I could say, I saw that my old friend had resolved on his course and that it was idle to parley. I told him finally that it was impossible for me to join him. I could see Harpers Ferry only as a trap of steel, and ourselves in the wrong side of it. He regretted my decision and we parted.

Thus far, I have spoken exclusively of Capt. Brown. Let me say a word or two of his brave and devoted men, and first of Shields Green. He was a fugitive slave from Charleston, South Carolina, and had attested his love of liberty by escaping from slavery and making his way through many dangers to Rochester, where he had lived in my family, and where he met the man with whom he went to the scaffold. I said to him, as I was about to leave, "Now Shields, you have heard our discussion. If in view of it, you do not wish to stay, you have but to say so, and you can go back with me." He answered, "I b'l'ave I'll go wid de old man;" and go with him he did, into the fight, and to the gallows, and bore himself as grandly as any of the number. At the moment when Capt. Brown was surrounded, and all chance of escape was cut off, Green was in the mountains and could have made his escape as Osborne Anderson did, but when asked to do so, he made the same answer he did at Chambersburg, "I b'l'ave I'll go down wid de ole man." When in prison at Charlestown, and he was not allowed to see his old friend, his fidelity to him was in no wise weakened, and no complaint against Brown could be extorted from him by those who talked with him.

SHIELDS GREEN

JOHN HENRY KAGI

The wife of [Dangerfield Newby](#) wrote to him (a letter that would be found on his corpse at [Harpers Ferry](#)):

Dear Husband:

Your kind letter came duly to hand, and it gave me much pleasure to here from you, and especely to here you are better off [with]



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

your rhumatism, and hope when I here from you again, you may be entirely well. I want you to buy me as soon as possible, for if you do not get me some body else will.... Dear Husband you [know], not the trouble I see; the last two years has ben like a trouble dream to me.

It is said Master is in want of monney. If so, I know not what time he may sell me, an then all my bright hops of the futer are blasted, for their has ben one bright hope to cheer me in all my troubles, that is to be with you, for if I thought I should never see you this earth would have no charms for me....

It is positively known only that Harriet Newby and her children were sold to the “deep south.” All that has been found out about the Newby family is inferred from the three surviving letters found on Dangerfield’s corpse. The story of this husband’s desperate attempts to raise enough money to buy his wife and children is one that is difficult to read — when he managed to raise the specified amount, the slavemaster simply demanded more.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR AUGUST 16th]

August 18, Thursday: Parma, Piacenza, and Modena were unified.

Some anonymous person was writing to [Secretary of War John Buchanan Floyd](#) (two identical postings, one sent on this date from near Philadelphia and the other sent on August 20th from Cincinnati) to warn the federal government against the plan for a raid on a federal arsenal (Secretary of War Floyd would receive the communications while at Red Sweet Springs in Virginia, read them, and take no steps of any kind; he would explain that he had supposed the letters to be false in their entirety on account of the fact there was no federal arsenal in Maryland — also, as Secretary of War, he was receiving a whole lot of such spurious communications):

Sir, — I have lately received information of a movement of so great importance that I feel it to be my duty to impart it to you without delay.

I have discovered the existence of a secret association, having for its object the liberation of the slaves, at the South, by a general insurrection. The leader of the movement is old John Brown, late of Kansas. He has been in Canada, during the winter, drilling the negroes there, and they are only waiting his word to start for the South, to assist the Slaves. They have one of the leading men, a white man, in an armory in Maryland; where it is situated, I have not been able to learn. As soon as everything is ready, those of their number who are in the Northern States and Canada are to come, in small companies, to their rendezvous, which is in the mountains in Virginia. They will pass down through Pennsylvania and Maryland, and enter Virginia at Harper's Ferry. Brown left the North about three or four weeks ago, and will arm the negroes and strike the blow in

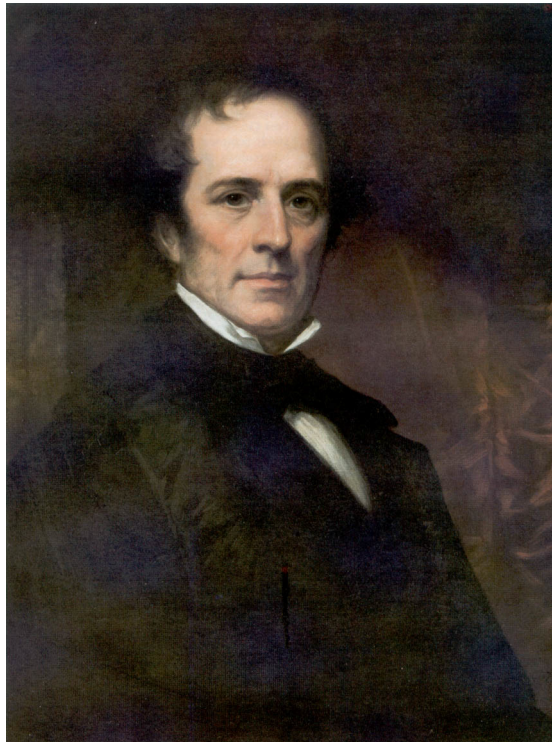


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NOT CIVIL WAR

a few weeks, and so that whatever is done must be done at once. They have a large quantity of arms at their rendezvous, and probably distributing them already.

As I am not fully in their confidence, this is all the information I can give you. I dare not sign my name to this, but I trust that you will not disregard the warning on that account.



[Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by Welch, Bigelow, & Co. of Cambridge, Massachusetts, who were sending along \$15.⁰⁰ for 10 pounds of finely ground graphite to use for ink in their rotary printing press:

*Cambridge Aug 18
Mr Thoreau
Dear Sir
Inclosed
please find \$15 00 for
which send us 10 #s
Blacklead by return of
express—directed as
usual
Yours truly
Welch, Bigelow, &C^o
Aug 18.*



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR



August 18, Thursday: Half the leaves of some cherries in dry places are quite orange now and ready to fall.

Three weeks before the raid on [Harpers Ferry John Brown](#) had written to [Frederick Douglass](#), asking to meet him at a stone-quarry in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. He had asked Douglass to bring “Emperor” [Shields Green](#), a former slave from South Carolina to whom he had revealed his plans. Douglass and Green had departed for Pennsylvania, stopping off along the way at the home of the [Reverend and Mrs. James Gloucester](#) in Brooklyn, New York. Upon reaching Chambersburg, Douglass would be asked to deliver a speech. It would be after the conclusion of this speech, that Douglass and Green would proceed to the quarry and meet with [Captain Brown](#) and [John Henry Kagi](#). Brown asked, “Come with me, Douglass; I will defend you with my life. I want you for a special purpose. When I strike, the bees will begin to swarm, and I shall want you to help hive them.” However, Douglass balked at the plan to attack the armory at Harpers Ferry. Shields Green, ever a man of few words, said “I b’leve I’ll go wid de old man.”



On their way to Chambersburg [Mr. Douglass](#) and [Shields Green](#) stopped at [Mrs. E.A. Gloucester](#)'s in Brooklyn, August 18, who sent through Mr. Douglass to [Captain Brown](#) a letter and a small amount of money. The following is a copy of a letter signed by colored citizens of Philadelphia, which was found among the papers at the Kennedy farm, Brown's headquarters before moving on to Harper's [sic] Ferry, and was sent to Mr. Douglass at Rochester in September: “F.D., Esq., Dear Sir, – The undersigned feel it to be of the utmost importance that our class be properly represented in a convention to come off right away (near) Chambersburg, in this state. We think you are the man of all others to represent us; and we severally pledge ourselves that in case you will come right on we will see your family well provided for during your absence, or until your safe return to them. Answer to us and to John Henrie, Esq., Chambersburg, Penn., at once. We are ready to make you a remittance, if you go. We have now quite a number of good but not very intelligent representatives collected. Some of our numbers are ready to go on with you.” It was never known why this letter was sent to Mr. Douglass. He thinks, however, that the sending of it was prompted by [Kagi](#), who was present at the Chambersburg interview, and had heard him say that he could not go to Harper's [sic] Ferry in the way proposed. Kagi probably thought a letter signed as this would induce Mr. Douglass to reconsider his determination and at last consent to accompany Brown.

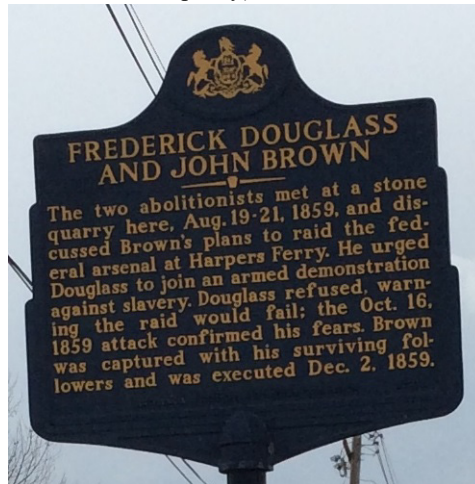
FREDERICK DOUGLASS



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August 19, Friday: The local barber [Henry Watson](#) led [Frederick Douglass](#) and his bodyguard [Shields "Emperor" Green](#) to the Chambersburg, Pennsylvania stone quarry where [John Brown](#) and his bodyguard [John Henry Kagi](#) were waiting, posing as fishermen (there is a historical marker at the current location that purports, in the consensual tourist reality, to have been that quarry).



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR AUGUST 19th]

RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

August 20, Saturday: It was at about this time that the term “interview” was obtaining its modern American sense, and in this day’s [New-York Tribune](#) appeared the 1st such modern interview with a major public figure, [Brigham Young](#), presenting verbatim all his responses to questions of public interest. [Horace Greeley](#) had interviewed this leader of the [Mormons](#) in Salt Lake City on July 13th. 



[Frederick Douglass](#) met secretly for a 2d day with [John Brown](#) in a stone quarry near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, where when he learned of the independent in injudicious moves currently being made by this Captain Brown who had taken the bit between his teeth, he terminated his association with this group.



(One of the ironclad rules of this sort of loose conspiracy of treason is that it is the wildest heads that always run away with the plans, taking over actual leadership and control through their very audacity and unwisdom — becoming thus audacious and unwise is the very tactic by which they can ever seize this leadership and control.)

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[Frederick Douglass](#) turned back, but [Shields Green](#) joined Captain [John Brown](#) and proceeded toward the raid on [Harpers Ferry](#).



This would cost him his life.

Some anonymous person was writing to [Secretary of War John Buchanan Floyd](#) (two identical postings, one sent the 18th from near Philadelphia and the other sent on this date from Cincinnati) to warn the federal government of the plan for a raid on a federal arsenal (Secretary of War Floyd would receive the letters while at Red Sweet Springs in Virginia, read them, and take no steps of any kind; he would explain that he had supposed the letters to be false in their entirety on account of the fact there was no federal arsenal in Maryland; also, as Secretary of War, he was receiving a whole lot of such spurious communications)

Sir, - I have lately received information of a movement of so great importance that I feel it to be my duty to impart it to you without delay.

I have discovered the existence of a secret association, having for its object the liberation of the slaves, at the South, by a general insurrection. The leader of the movement is old John Brown, late of Kansas. He has been in Canada, during the winter, drilling the negroes there, and they are only waiting his word to start for the South, to assist the Slaves. They have one of the leading men, a white man, in an armory in Maryland; where



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it is situated, I have not been able to learn. As soon as everything is ready, those of their number who are in the Northern States and Canada are to come, in small companies, to their rendezvous, which is in the mountains in Virginia. They will pass down through Pennsylvania and Maryland, and enter Virginia at Harper's Ferry. Brown left the North about three or four weeks ago, and will arm the negroes and strike the blow in a few weeks, and so that whatever is done must be done at once. They have a large quantity of arms at their rendezvous, and probably distributing them already.

As I am not fully in their confidence, this is all the information I can give you. I dare not sign my name to this, but I trust that you will not disregard the warning on that account.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR AUGUST 20th]



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

[Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) embarked on the *Senator* to steam south along the [California](#) coast toward San Diego.

AND NOW, FOR SOMETHING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT, A REPORT FROM OUR SAILOR:

Saturday, August 20th. The steamer *Senator* makes regular trips up and down the coast, between San Francisco and San Diego, calling at intermediate ports. This is my opportunity to revisit the old scenes. She sails to-day, and I am off, steaming among the great clippers anchored in the harbor, and gliding rapidly round the point, past Alcatraz Island, the light-house, and through the fortified Golden Gate, and bending to the southward,— all done in two or three hours, which, in the *Alert*, under canvas, with head tides, variable winds, and sweeping currents to deal with, took us full two days.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

THE REPORT FROM OUR SAILOR DANA, CONTINUED:

Among the passengers I noticed an elderly gentleman, thin, with sandy hair and face that seemed familiar. He took off his glove and showed one shrivelled hand. It must be he! I went to him and said, "Captain Wilson, I believe." Yes, that was his name. "I knew you, sir, when you commanded the *Ayacucho* on this coast, in old hide-droghing times, in 1835-6." He was quickened by this, and at once inquiries were made on each side, and we were in full talk about the *Pilgrim* and *Alert*, *Ayacucho* and *Loriotte*, the *California* and *Lagoda*. I found he had been very much flattered by the praise I had bestowed in my book on his seamanship, especially in bringing the *Pilgrim* to her berth in San Diego harbor, after she had drifted successively into the *Lagoda* and *Loriotte*, and was coming into him. I had made a pet of his brig, the *Ayacucho*, which pleased him almost as much as my remembrance of his bride and their wedding, which I saw at Santa Barbara in 1836. Dona Ramona was now the mother of a large family, and Wilson assured me that if I would visit him at his rancho, near San Luis Obispo, I should find her still a handsome woman, and very glad to see me. How we walked the deck together, hour after hour, talking over the old times,—the ships, the captains, the crews, the traders on shore, the ladies, the Missions, the south-easters! indeed, where could we stop? He had sold the *Ayacucho* in Chili for a vessel of war, and had given up the sea, and had been for years a ranchero. (I learned from others that he had become one of the most wealthy and respectable farmers in the State, and that his rancho was well worth visiting.) Thompson, he said, hadn't the sailor in him; and he never could laugh enough at his fiasco in San Diego, and his reception by Bradshaw. Faucon was a sailor and a navigator. He did not know what had become of George Marsh, except that he left him in Callao; nor could he tell me anything of handsome Bill Jackson, nor of Captain Nye of the *Loriotte*. I told him all I then knew of the ships, the masters, and the officers. I found he had kept some run of my history, and needed little information. Old Senor Noriego of Santa Barbara, he told me, was dead, and Don Carlos and Don Santiago, but I should find their children there, now in middle life. Dona Augustia, he said, I had made famous by my praises of her beauty and dancing, and I should have from her a royal reception. She had been a widow, and remarried since, and had a daughter as handsome as herself. The descendants of Noriego had taken the ancestral name of De la Guerra, as they were nobles of Old Spain by birth; and the boy Pablo, who used to make passages in the *Alert*, was now Don Pablo de la Guerra, a Senator in the State Legislature for Santa Barbara County.

The points in the country, too, he noticed, as he passed them,—Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, Point Ano Nuevo, the opening to Monterey, which to my disappointment we did not visit. No; Monterey, the prettiest town on the coast, and its capital and seat of customs, had got no advantage from the great changes, was out of the way of commerce and of the travel to the mines and great rivers, and was not worth stopping at. Point Conception we passed in the night, a cheery light gleaming over the waters from its tall light-house, standing on its outermost peak. Point Conception! That word was enough to recall all our experiences and dreads of gales, swept decks, topmast carried away, and the hardships of a coast service in the winter. But Captain Wilson tells me that the climate has altered; that the southeasters are no longer the bane of the coast they once were, and that vessels now anchor inside the kelp at Santa Barbara and San Pedro all the year round. I should have thought this owing to his spending his winters on a rancho instead of the deck of the *Ayacucho*, had not the same thing been told me by others.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

THE REPORT FROM OUR SAILOR DANA, CONCLUDED:

Passing round Point Conception, and steering easterly, we opened the islands that form, with the mainland, the canal of Santa Barbara. There they are, Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa; and there is the beautiful point, Santa Buenaventura; and there lies Santa Barbara on its plain, with its amphitheatre of high hills and distant mountains. There is the old white Mission with its belfries, and there the town, with its one-story adobe houses, with here and there a two-story wooden house of later build; yet little is it altered;— the same repose in the golden sunlight and glorious climate, sheltered by its hills; and then, more remindful than anything else, there roars and tumbles upon the beach the same grand surf of the great Pacific as on the beautiful day when the *Pilgrim*, after her five months' voyage, dropped her weary anchors here; the same bright blue ocean, and the surf making just the same monotonous, melancholy roar, and the same dreamy town, and gleaming white Mission, as when we beached our boats for the first time, riding over the breakers with shouting Kanakas, the three small hide-traders lying at anchor in the offing. But now we are the only vessel, and that an unromantic, sail-less, spar-less, engine-driven hulk!

I landed in the surf, in the old style, but it was not high enough to excite us, the only change being that I was somehow unaccountably a passenger, and did not have to jump overboard and steady the boat, and run her up by the gunwales.

Santa Barbara has gained but little. I should not know, from anything I saw, that she was now a seaport of the United States, a part of the enterprising Yankee nation, and not still a lifeless Mexican town. At the same old house, where Senor Noriego lived, on the piazza in front of the court-yard, where was the gay scene of the marriage of our agent, Mr. Robinson, to Dona Anita, where Don Juan Bandini and Dona Augustia danced, Don Pablo de la Guerra received me in a courtly fashion. I passed the day with the family, and in walking about the place; and ate the old dinner with its accompaniments of frijoles, native olives and grapes, and native wines. In due time I paid my respects to Dona Augustia, and notwithstanding what Wilson told me, I could hardly believe that after twenty-four years there would still be so much of the enchanting woman about her.

She thanked me for the kind and, as she called them, greatly exaggerated compliments I had paid her; and her daughter told me that all travellers who came to Santa Barbara called to see her mother, and that she herself never expected to live long enough to be a belle.

Mr. Alfred Robinson, our agent in 1835-6, was here, with a part of his family. I did not know how he would receive me, remembering what I had printed to the world about him at a time when I took little thought that the world was going to read it; but there was no sign of offence, only cordiality which gave him, as between us, rather the advantage in status.

The people of this region are giving attention to sheep-raising, wine-making, and the raising of olives, just enough to keep the town from going backwards.

But evening is drawing on, and our boat sails to-night. So, refusing a horse or carriage, I walk down, not unwilling to be a little early, that I may pace up and down the beach, looking off to the islands and the points, and watching the roaring, tumbling billows. How softening is the effect of time! It touches us through the affections. I almost feel as if I were lamenting the passing away of something loved and dear,— the boats, the Kanakas, the hides, my old shipmates. Death, change, distance, lend them a character which makes them quite another thing from the vulgar, wearisome toil of uninteresting, forced manual labour.

The breeze freshened as we stood out to sea, and the wild waves rolled over the red sun, on the broad horizon of the Pacific; but it is summer, and in summer there can be no bad weather in California. Every day is pleasant. Nature forbids a drop of rain to fall by day or night, or a wind to excite itself beyond a fresh summer breeze.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

August 24, Wednesday: The Valley Spirit of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania reported on page 5, column 2 about the recent visit by "Fred. Douglas," "gentleman of color," to that town, from August 16th into August 21st, complimenting him on his public oratory but not on his message for "He would appear to forget altogether that the Creator Himself has made a distinction when he established the great and immovable barrier of color between the races." This newspaper article did not, of course, mention [Frederick Douglass](#)'s secret meeting with [John Brown](#) at the abandoned quarry.

Fred. Douglas.—This gentleman of color paid our town a visit, on Saturday last, to brighten the prospects of his Republican friends which are now so hopelessly in the dark. There is no calling in question the extraordinary ability of Mr Douglas as an Orator. He is an elegant and powerful speaker, and possesses a clear well modulated voice, and a style of elocution unaffected and impressive. His discourse was well received by a large and attentive auditory, and with occasional demonstrations of applause from those who seemed disposed to favor his peculiar doctrine. His aim is to place the negro on an equality with the white man—to have him eat at the same table, sit in the same pew, and vote at the same ballot box. He would appear to forget altogether that the Creator Himself has made a distinction when he established the great and immovable barrier of color between the races. Mr. Douglas certainly does not benefit his cause by opening his veins of wrath on religion, or by representing our leading divines as monsters of inhumanity. They certainly are as capable of knowing what is right and what is wrong as he is, and may be supposed to be as honest in their views. We are constrained to say that that portion of his discourse deserves the pointed rebuke of the whole community.



August 24, Wednesday: P.M.—To Conantum.

The small sempervirens blackberry in prime in one place. Aster puniceus and Diplopappus umbellatus, how long? Calamagrostis coarctata not quite, end of Hubbard's meadow wood-path. Panicum virgatum, say two or three weeks. Leersia, or cut-grass, some time, roadside, Corner road, by brook.



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The *Senator*, carrying [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) steamed south from San Pedro toward Santa Barbara, passed Point Conception, and stopped at San Luis Obispo to disembark a VIP passenger.



AND NOW, FOR SOMETHING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT, A REPORT FROM OUR SAILOR:

Wednesday, August 24th. At anchor at San Pedro by daylight. But instead of being roused out of the forecandle to row the long-boat ashore and bring off a load of hides before breakfast, we were served with breakfast in the cabin, and again took our drive with the wild horses to the Pueblo and spent the day; seeing nearly the same persons as before, and again getting back by dark. We steamed again for Santa Barbara, where we only lay an hour, and passed through its canal and round Point Conception, stopping at San Luis Obispo to land my friend, as I may truly call him after this long passage together, Captain Wilson, whose most earnest invitation to stop here and visit him at his rancho I was obliged to decline.

September 16, Thursday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed some land on Bedford Road near P.J. Sexton and J.B. Moore (this would not be Jacob Bailey Moore of New Hampshire because he had died in San Francisco in 1853), for [Waldo Emerson](#). His fee was \$2.⁰⁰.



View [Henry Thoreau](#)'s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/385.htm



September 16. Another and severer frost, which cut off all our vines, etc., lespedeza, corn, etc.
P.M.— By the roadside, forty or fifty rods east of the South Acton station, I find the *Aster Novæ-Angliæ*, apparently past prime. I must call it a plant of this vicinity, then. I thought it “in prime or a little past” at Salem, September 21, 1858. I will venture to put it with the *A. puniceus*.
Young Nealy says that there are blue-winged teal about now. Others are out after ducks. Nealy says he shot the first golden plover he has seen, this morning. [Does he know it?]⁶⁶
How unpromising are promising men! Hardly any disgust me so much. I have no faith in them. They make gratuitous promises, and they break them gratuitously.
When an Irishwoman tells me that she wouldn't tell a lie for her life (because I appear to doubt her), it seems to me that she has already told a lie. She holds herself and the truth very cheap to say that so easily.



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What troubles men lay up for want of a little energy and precision! A man who steps quickly to his mark leaves a great deal of filth behind. There's many a well-meaning fellow who thinks he has a hard time of it who will not put his shoulder to the wheel, being spell-bound, – who sits about, as if he were hatching his good intentions, and every now and then his friends get up a subscription for him, and he is cursed with the praise of being “a clever fellow.” It would really be worth his while to go straight to his master the devil, if he would only shake him up when he got there. Men who have not learned the value of time, or of anything else; for whom an infant school and a birchen rod is still and forever necessary. A man who is not prompt affects me as a creature covered with slime, crawling through mud and lying dormant a great part of the year. Think of the numbers –men and women– who want and *will* have and *do* have (how do they get it?!) what they will not earn! The non-producers. How many of these bloodsuckers there are fastened to every helpful man or woman in this world! They constitute this world. It is a world full of snivelling prayers, – whose very religion is a prayer! As if beggars were admirable, were respectable, to anybody!

Again and again I am surprised to observe what an interval there is, in what is called civilized life, between the shell and the inhabitant of the shell, – what a disproportion there is between the life of man and his conveniences and luxuries. The house is neatly painted, has many apartments. You are shown into the sitting-room, where is a carpet and couch and mirror and splendidly bound Bible, daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, photographs of the whole family even, on the mantelpiece. One could live here more deliciously and improve his divine gifts better than in a cave surely. In the bright and costly saloon man will not be starving or freezing or contending with vermin surely, but he will be meditating a divine song or a heroic deed, or perfuming the atmosphere by the very breath of his natural and healthy existence. As the parlor is preferable to the cave, so will the life of its occupant be more godlike than that of the dweller in the cave. I called at such a house this afternoon, the house of one who in Europe would be called an operative. The woman was not in the third heavens, but in the third kitchen, as near the wood-shed or to outdoors and to the cave as she could instinctively get, for there she belonged, – a coarse scullion or wench, not one whit superior, but in fact inferior, to the squaw in a wigwam, – and the master of the house, where was he? He was drunk somewhere, on some mow or behind some stack, and I could not see him. He had been having a spree. If he had been as sober as he may be to-morrow, it would have been essentially the same; for refinement is not in him, it is only in his house, – in the appliances which he did not invent. So is it in the Fifth Avenue and all over the civilized world. There is nothing but confusion in our New England life. The hogs are in the parlor. This man and his wife –and how many like them!– should have sucked their claws in some hole in a rock, or lurked like gypsies in the outbuildings of some diviner race. They've got into the wrong boxes; they rained down into these houses by mistake, as it is said to rain toads sometimes. They wear these advantages helter-skelter and without appreciating them, or to satisfy a vulgar taste, just as savages wear the dress of civilized men, just as that Indian chief walked the streets of New Orleans clad in nothing but a gaudy

66. This “Young Nealy” (Edward Nealy or Neally or Nealey), would eventually be buried beneath an Indian grindstone which he would allege he and Thoreau had found together. There seems, however, to be a lack of evidence as to said grindstone:





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military coat which his Great Father had given him. Some philanthropists trust that the houses will civilize the inhabitants at last. The mass of men, just like savages, strive always after the outside, the clothes and finery of civilized life, the blue beads and tinsel and centre-tables. It is a wonder that any load ever gets moved, men are so prone to put the cart before the horse.

We do everything according to the fashion, just as the Flatheads flatten the heads of their children. We conform ourselves in a myriad ways and with infinite pains to the fashions of our time. We mourn for our lost relatives according to fashion, and as some nations hire professed mourners to howl, so we hire stone-masons to hammer and blast by the month and so express our grief. Or if a public character dies, we get up a regular wake with eating and drinking till midnight.

Grasshoppers have been very abundant in dry fields for two or three weeks. Sophia walked through the Depot Field a fortnight ago, and when she got home picked fifty or sixty from her skirts, – for she wore hoops and crinoline. Would not this be a good way to clear a field of them, – to send a bevy of fashionably dressed ladies across a field and leave them to clean their skirts when they get home? It would supplant anything at the patent office, and the motive power is cheap.

I am invited to take some party of ladies or gentlemen on an excursion, –to walk or sail, or the like,– but by all kinds of evasions I omit it, and am thought to be rude and unaccommodating therefore. They do not consider that the wood-path and the boat are my studio, where I maintain a sacred solitude and cannot admit promiscuous company. I will see them occasionally in an evening or at the table, however. They do not think of taking a child away from its school to go a-huckleberrying with them. Why should not I, then, have my school and school hours to be respected? Ask me for a certain number of dollars if you will, but do not ask me for my afternoons.

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At about this point in time (which is to say, mid-month), [Martin Robison Delany](#) was sailing along the coast of Africa toward Lagos. He would be spending five weeks there.



At about this point in time, also, the handsome [John E. Cook](#) was reconnoitering [Harpers Ferry](#) on behalf of Captain [John Brown](#)'s guerrillas, when he hailed the debonair local plantation owner and slavemaster Lewis W. Washington on the street: "I believe you have a great many interesting relics at your house; could I have permission to see them if I should walk out someday?"



Cook was of course aware, as everyone was aware, that this Washington was a descendant of the General/President [George Washington](#) as well as a special assistant to [Henry A. Wise](#), the Governor of Virginia. When Cook would visit the Washington plantation a few days later, he would be especially fascinated by the neat pistol presented to General Washington by the *Marquis de Lafayette* after the Revolution, enough so as to inquire whether it shot well, and by the neat ceremonial sword which had been presented to General

Washington by none other than Frederick the Great of Prussia.



← **George Washington's sword
(in the famous Leutze painting).**



September 27, Tuesday: [John Brown](#) was at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania en route to Philadelphia.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR SEPTEMBER 27th]

September 30, Friday: In Boston, [William Cooper Nell](#) was recognized as a conductor on the [Underground Railroad](#).

On this date [John Brown](#) was on his way back to his hideout at the Kenedy farm from Philadelphia through Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.



September 30: P. M.—Up Assabet.

Ever since the unusually early and severe frost of the 16th, the evergreen ferns have been growing more and more distinct amid the fading and decaying and withering ones, and the sight of those suggests a cooler season. They are greener than ever, by contrast. The terminal shield fern is one of the handsomest. The most decidedly evergreen are the last, polypody, *Aspidium marginale*, and *Aspidium spinulosum* of Woodis Swamp and Brister's. *Asplenium Filix-foemina* (?) is decaying, maybe a little later than the *dicksonia*,—the largish fern with long, narrow pinnules deeply cut and toothed, and reniform fruit-dots.

Of the twenty-three ferns which I seem to know here, seven may be called evergreens. As far as I know, the earliest to wither and fall are the brake (mostly fallen), the *Osmunda cinnamomea* (begun to be stripped of leaves), *O. Claytoniana*, and *O. regalis* (the above four generally a long time withered, or say since the 20th); also (5th), as soon, the exposed onoclea; then (6th) the *dicksonia*, (7th) *Aspidium Noveboracense*, (8th) *Thelypteris*, (9th) *Filix-foemina* (the last four now fully half faded or decayed or withered). Those not seen are *Adiantum pedatum*, *Woodwardia Virginica*, *Asplenium thelypteroides*, *Woodsia Ilvensis*, *Aspidium cristatum*,



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Lygodium palmatum, Botrychium Virginicum.

Some acorns (swamp white oak) are browned on the trees, and some bass berries. Most shrub oak acorns browned.

The wild rice is almost entirely fallen or eaten, apparently by some insect, but I see some green and also black grains left. [For more of September, vide [2 OCTOBER 59].

Fall: Early in the fall season, [John Brown, Jr.](#) coordinated with [Frederick Douglass](#)⁶⁷ and solicited the support of other black leaders in northern New York and in [Canada](#).

67. Sometime earlier during 1859, [John Brown](#) himself had secretly met with [Frederick Douglass](#) near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania and so the black leader definitely had advance warning of the attack the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#). Douglass had, however, at this point, sensed failure and flatly refused any further participation. Douglass did not go to the federal authorities and diss Brown — although in failing to do this Douglass did make himself essentially complicit in treason, which under the law of conspiracy of course requires the same capital punishment.



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Fall: It was perhaps during this fall season that, as [Waldo Emerson](#) mused in his journal about a discussion with Mrs. Anna Barker Ward (the banker's wife who had gone from Quakerism to Unitarianism to Catholicism) and about a remark [Henry Thoreau](#) has made about the education of the young in regard to the eloquence of [John Brown](#), he began to think of the imminence of an unjust death for Brown and this thought of Brown's truthfulness, combined with this thought of Thoreau's advice, began to lead Emerson's mind toward the wisdom of "drop[ping] the load of Memory & of Futurity, Memory & Care, & let[ting] the moment suffice us." Frightened by this devouring thought, Emerson's pen immediately secreted a blot of [Platonism](#), and in the midst of an obscuring cloud his mind made its usual escape. When his mind re-emerges from its cloud, Thoreau is absent and Emerson is with his maidservant.⁶⁸

Anna Ward was at a loss in talking with me, because I had no church whose weakness she could show up, in return for my charges upon hers [Roman Catholic??]. I said to her, Do you not see that though I have no eloquence & no flow of thought, yet that I do not stoop to accept any thing less than truth? that I sit here contented with my poverty, mendicity [sic], & deaf & dumb estate, from year to year, from youth to age, rather than adorn myself with any red rag of false church or false association? My low & lonely sitting here by the wayside, is my homage to truth, which I see is sufficient without me; which is honored by my abstaining, not by superserviceableness. I see how grand & selfsufficing it is; how it burns up, & will none of your shifty patchwork of additions & ingenuities.

Brown shows us, said H.D.T., another school to send our boys to – that the best lesson of oratory is to speak the truth. A lesson rarely learned – To stand by the truth. We stand by our party, our trade, our reputation, our talent, but these each lead away from the truth. That is so volatile & vital, evanescing instantly from all but dedication to it. And yet inspiration is that, to be so quick as truth; to drop the load of Memory & of Futurity, Memory & Care, & let the moment suffice us: then one discovers that the first thought is related to all thought & carries power & fate in its womb. Mattie Griffith says, if Brown is hung, the gallows will be sacred as the cross.



68. This Mattie Griffith of whom [Emerson](#) wrote was the daughter of a Southern slavemaster who had in 1856 authored a novel which had posed falsely as an authentic slave narrative, THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A FEMALE SLAVE.

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October: Mrs. [Mary Ann Day Brown](#) –who had just lost two sons, unceremoniously dumped at midnight into an



unmarked pit courtesy of the US Army, and was due to lose a husband as well– took shelter at “Roadside,” the home of [James](#) and [Lucretia Mott](#) in Cheltenham Hills outside Philadelphia (America’s city of brotherly love).



October 1, Saturday: In Syracuse, New York, the 8th annual “Jerry Celebration” sponsored in his absence by the Unitarian congregation of the Reverend [Samuel Joseph May](#), honoring the freeing of [Jerry McHenry](#) from the federal marshals who had been seeking to “return” him to his “owner” on October 1, 1851.



RESISTING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

[John Brown](#) was at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

Early in the month, the [Hawthornes](#) journeyed from the Redcar resort on the coast of Yorkshire to Leamington Spa, where [Nathaniel](#) would complete THE MARBLE FAUN.



October 1: P.M.–To the beeches.



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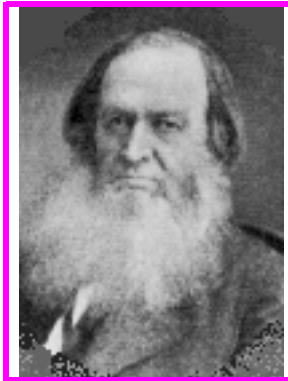
Looking down from Pine Hill, I see a fish hawk over Walden.

The shrub oaks on this hill are now at their height, both with respect to their tints and their fruit. The plateaus and little hollows are crowded with them three to five feet high, the pretty fruit, varying in size, pointedness, and downiness, being now generally turned brown, with light, converging meridional lines. Many leading shoots are perfectly bare of leaves, the effect of the frost, and on some bushes half the cups are empty, but these cups generally bear the marks of squirrels' teeth, and probably but few acorns have fallen of themselves yet. However, they are just ready to fall, and if you bend back the peduncles on these bare and frost-touched shoots, you find them just ready to come off, separating at the base of the peduncle, and the peduncle remaining attached to the fruit. The squirrels, probably striped, must be very busy here nowadays. Though many twigs are bare, these clusters of brown fruit in their grayish-brown cups are unnoticed and almost invisible, unless you are looking for them, above the ground, which is strewn with their similarly colored leaves; i. e., this leaf-strewn earth has the same general gray and brown color with the twigs and fruit, and you may brush against great wreaths of fruit without noticing them. You press through dense groves full of this interesting fruit, each seeming prettier than the last. Now is the time for shrub oak acorns, then, if not for others. I see where the squirrels have left the shells on rocks and stumps. They take the acorn out of its cup on the bush, leaving the cup there with a piece bit out of its edge.

The little beechnut burs are mostly empty, and the ground is strewn with the nuts mostly empty and abortive. Yet I pluck some apparently full grown with meat. This fruit is apparently now at its height.

October 6, Thursday, night: Another piece of evidence that this conspiracy among an inordinately large group of bunglers and amateurs, that we now obtusely term the [Secret "Six"](#) rather than the "Secret 600," could not conceivably have been escaping the surveillance of our government:

Though all of the committee did not know all of the details of the attack (for instance, they were shocked when [John Brown](#) was trapped inside the [Harpers Ferry](#) arsenal, since he had assured them that his primary objective was to strike the arsenal quickly and capture the weapons housed there), at least 4 — [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), [George Luther Stearns](#), [Gerrit Smith](#),



and [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#)— certainly knew when, where, and how Brown intended to start his violent work. Ten days

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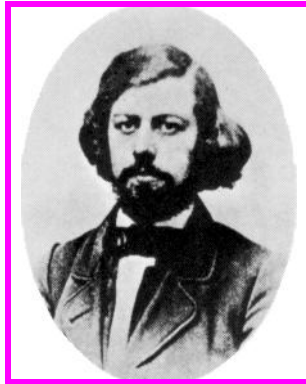
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before the October assault, Sanborn, Stearns, and [Lewis Hayden](#),



a leader of Boston's black community (who was not a formal member of the secret group but undoubtedly had intimate knowledge of its proceedings), stayed awake all night outlining the proposal to [Francis Jackson Meriam](#), a young man who soon




afterward joined Brown's insurrectionary cadre. In short, the factual record of the conspiracy can be accurately reconstructed despite the destruction of some sources.... Sanborn continued to search for funds. On October 6, the search ended when Sanborn met and interviewed young Meriam, the emotionally erratic nephew of the distinguished Boston abolitionist, [Francis Jackson](#). Meriam was obsessed with the thought of joining Brown and asked Sanborn to give him specific information about Brown's plans. He already knew a great deal about the scheme because of his friendship with [James Redpath](#). At first Sanborn balked. However, when Meriam offered to contribute \$600 [in gold] to the plan if he were allowed to participate in it, the committee secretary quickly reconsidered. Sanborn summoned Stearns and Hayden to [Concord](#) to assist him in making the decision. During the evening of October 6 and the early morning hours of October 7, all three



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men rigorously questioned Meriam about his motives for wanting to join with Brown and the personal qualifications he had for assisting the proposed raid. Meriam said he had traveled with Redpath in 1857 and 1858 as the journalist gathered information for his book TALKS WITH SLAVES. But in spite of these experiences, neither Sanborn, Stearns, nor Hayden was impressed with the unstable youth. Still, all of them knew of Brown's desperate need for cash. Meriam might not be qualified for the project, but the money he could contribute insured execution of the plan. Eventually, they all decided to send him to Chambersburg.... Within a few days Sanborn [would receive] a note from Meriam indicating that he had joined Brown, turned over the \$600, and was patiently awaiting the "business operation" that was soon to commence.  Sanborn was excited.... There was absolutely no reason to doubt Brown. The secretary met the Reverend Higginson's criticism of Meriam with a highly matured cynicism. Meriam had not been chosen because of any "great passion for Redpath" or belief in the youth's personal capacity. Sanborn agreed that Meriam was about "as fit to be in the enterprise as the Devil to keep a powder house." Meriam had been selected only because of the money he could contribute to the project. Sanborn reminded Higginson that "everything had its use and must be put to it if possible." Then, after informing Higginson that news could soon be expected from the site of Brown's activity, the secretary concluded his letter with a brief lecture on one of the most important lessons he had learned in the past few years. Sanborn told Higginson that he never expected much from anybody but believed there was "a grain of use in all persons and things." When "a plum" dropped in one's mouth, one shouldn't refuse to eat it because it wasn't "a peach or a pumpkin." Meriam might not be "Divine property," but he was a "plum" and had his use.

October 8, Saturday: [John Brown](#) was at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

Kibrisli Mehmed Pasha replaced Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha as Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 8th]

October 11, Tuesday: [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) and [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) made a donation, through [Waldo Emerson](#), for [John Brown](#).



October 11: P.M.—To Cliffs.

Looking under large oaks, black and white, the acorns appear to have fallen or been gathered by squirrels, etc. I see in many *distant* places stout twigs (black or scarlet oak) three or four inches long which have been gnawed off by the squirrels, with four to seven acorns on each, and left on the ground. These twigs have been gnawed off on each side of the nuts in order to make them more portable, I suppose. The nuts all abstracted and sides of

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the cups broken to get them out.



The note of the chickadee, heard now in cooler weather and above many fallen leaves, has a new significance. There was a very severe frost this morning (ground stiffened), probably a chestnut-opening frost, a season-riper, opener of the burs that inclose the Indian summer. Such is the cold of early or middle October. The leaves and weeds had that stiff, hoary appearance.

October 15, Saturday: [Francis Jackson Meriam](#) arrived at [John Brown](#)'s camp near [Harpers Ferry](#), turned over his \$600 in gold coins, and settled down as well as he could to await the "business operation" that he had been told was soon to commence.



Just before the raid, perhaps on this day and perhaps not, [Martha Brewster Brown](#), the wife of [Oliver Brown](#), was sent back north.



October 15: P.M.—To Botrychium Swamp.



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A cold northwest wind.

I see some black oak acorns on the trees still and in some places at least half the shrub oak acorns. The last are handsomer now that they have turned so much darker.

I go along the east edge of Poplar Hill. This very cold and windy day, now that so many leaves have fallen, I begin to notice the silveriness of willows blown up in the wind, – a November sight.

The hickories at Poplar Hill (and elsewhere, as far as I perceive) are all past prime now and most half-withered or bare, very different from last year. In warmer autumns, if I remember rightly, they last several weeks later than this in some localities, one succeeding another with its splendid glow, an evidence of the genialness of the season. In cool and moist places, in a genial year, some are preserved green after others have changed, and by their later change and glow they prolong the season of autumnal tints very agreeably.

This is a cold fall.

The larches in A. Heywood's swamp, though a yellower green than the white pines, are not yet sharply distinguished from them by their form, as they will be.

The oaks generally are very fair now at a distance. Standing on this hilltop this cold and blustering day, when dark and slate-colored clouds are flitting over the sky, the beauty of the scenery is enhanced by the contrast in the short intervals of sunshine. The whole surface of the country, both young woodlands and full-grown forests, whether they clothe the sides of hills or their lit tops are seen over a ridge, – the birch phalanxes and huckleberry flocks [?], etc., – even to the horizon, is like a rug of many brilliant colors, with the towns in the more open and tawny spaces. The beauty or effect of the scene is enhanced, if, standing here, you see far in the horizon the red regiments of oaks alternately lit up by the sun and dimmed by the passing shadow of a cloud. As the shadows of these cold clouds flit across the landscape, the red banners of distant forests are lit up or disappear like the colors of a thousand regiments.

Pratt says that he planted a ground-nut in his garden in good soil, but they grew no bigger than a bean. He did not know but it would take more than one year, even if he planted the tuber.

The yellow birches are generally bare. Juniperus repens leaves have fallen, perhaps with red cedar. The ash trees I see to-day are quite bare, apparently several or some days.

The little leaves of the mitchella, with a whitish midrib and veins, lying generally flat on the mossy ground, perhaps about the base of a tree, with their bright-scarlet twin berries sprinkled over them, may properly be said to checker the ground. Now, particularly, they are noticed amid the fallen leaves.

The bayberry leaves have fallen, and all the berries are gone. I suppose the birds have eaten them. Mountain laurel leaves are fallen. The yellow birches are bare, revealing the fruit (the short, thick brown catkins) now ripe and ready to scale off. How full the trees are! About as thick as the leaves were. The fever-bush is for the most part bare, and I see no berries. Rhus radicans too is bare. The maidenhair is for the most part withered. It is not evergreen, then. The mountain sumach which I see is bare, and some smooth ditto.

That appears to be Aspidium cristatum which I find evergreen in swamps, but no fertile fronds now. It is broader and denser than the plate of the English one. It cannot be a described variety of spinulosum, for it is only once pinnate.

JENNY LIND

I think I see myrtle-birds on white birches, and that they are the birds I saw on them a week or two ago, – apparently, or probably, after the birch lice. See a Fringilla hyemalis. The chickadees sing as if at home. They are not travelling singers hired by any Barnum. Theirs is an honest, homely, heartfelt melody. Shall not the voice of man express as much content as the note of a bird?

Botrychium Lunaria has shed pollen, how long? The little larches in midst of Gowing's Swamp already changed, before others elsewhere.

Each town should have a park, or rather a primitive forest, of five hundred or a thousand acres, where a stick should never be cut for fuel, a common possession forever, for instruction and recreation. We hear of cow-commons and ministerial lots, but we want men-commons and lay lots, inalienable forever. Let us keep the New World new, preserve all the advantages of living in the country. There is meadow and pasture and wood-lot for the town's poor. Why not a forest and huckleberry-field for the town's rich? All Walden Wood might have been preserved for our park forever, with Walden in its midst, and the Easterbrooks Country, an unoccupied area of some four square miles, might have been our huckleberry-field. If any owners of these tracts are about to leave the world without natural heirs who need or deserve to be specially remembered, they will do wisely to abandon their possession to all, and not will them to some individual who perhaps has enough already. As some give to Harvard College or another institution, why might not another give a forest or huckleberry-field to Concord? A town is an institution which deserves to be remembered. We boast of our system of education, but why stop at schoolmasters and schoolhouses? We are all schoolmasters, and our schoolhouse is the universe. To attend chiefly to the desk or schoolhouse while we neglect the scenery in which it is placed is absurd. If we do not look out we shall find our fine schoolhouse standing in a cow-yard at last.

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The *Kalmia glauca*, now falling, is quite a brilliant scarlet. In this case you have the fresh liquid-green leaves of this year above the brilliant scarlet ones of last year. Most other evergreens exhibit only a contrast of green with yellow or yellowish.

The balm-of-Gileads by Mrs. Ripley's bare. Those beyond Barrett's Bridge green and full of leaves. The spruce leaves have fallen, – how long? – and its seeds are falling. Larch seeds falling. *Celtis* berries ripe, how long? *Solanum Dulcamara* berries linger over water but mostly are shrivelled. Canoe birch is now at least half fallen or more, apparently with the small white; looks in color like an aspen.

October 16, Sunday, night: Senator [James Murray Mason](#) was enjoying the federal Congress being out of session, at home with his family in Winchester, Virginia. This town was 20 easy miles away from [Harpers Ferry](#) along the Baltimore & Ohio RR tracks. Senator Mason would arrive in Harpers Ferry soon after Captain [John Brown](#)'s surrender, and interrogate the wounded old man in the presence of his mortally wounded son and in the presence of officer-in-charge [Robert E. Lee](#).



His idea of an investigation procedure was “Follow the money.” Mason would immediately begin to spread the necessary lie, that “**not a man, black or white, joined them** [emphasis his] after they came into Virginia, or gave them aid or assistance in any form.” The totality of the evidence he would be able to summon for the truth of this emphatic and utterly necessary assertion was that “The fact is undoubted.”⁶⁹

Subsequent historians have of course dutifully followed his lead in copying from one textbook into the next textbook the assertion that no Virginia slaves had joined this sudden, unannounced, unexpected attempt at the creation of a [servile insurrection](#). The thought has been just too utterly dangerous to contemplate — therefore the fact has had to correspond to the thought.

How to explain this? It is easily understood once one comes to recognize that the thing that really frosted sensible guys like Mason was not the prospect of race war, of a servile insurrection led by charismatics of the



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likes of [Frederick Douglass](#) and [Harriet Tubman](#), but the prospect of class war.⁷⁰ This guy had read [Hinton Rowan Helper](#)'s book THE IMPENDING CRISIS OF THE SOUTH: HOW TO MEET IT, and he knew very well who the real enemy was. The real enemy would be anyone who would use the race hatred of the poor whites of the South to set these poor whites against those rich whites of the South who were enjoying "ownership" over black Americans. Therefore the first question in the mind of a guy like Senator Mason would have been, not "Was Brown trying to key off a servile insurrection?" but a somewhat more complicated one, a question on the order of: "Was Brown's servile insurrection intended to key off a genocide in which all these armed poor

69. Jean Libby <jlibby@dvc.edu> of the Department of African American Studies at City College of San Francisco has had the following to offer in regard to the participation of local African Americans in the vicinity of Harpers Ferry during John Brown's raid. She uses [Osborn Perry Anderson](#)'s A VOICE FROM HARPER'S FERRY, written in 1860, as the basis of her research. The only specific deaths (the ultimate test of joining) of local slaves and free blacks are those in at least two primary sources. She published these in 1979 in BLACK VOICES FROM HARPERS FERRY. There is also "Mean To Be Free: John Brown's Black Nation Campaign," a videotape. These are referenced in FROM SLAVERY TO SALVATION: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF REV. THOMAS W. HENRY OF THE A.M.E. CHURCH," UP of Mississippi:

The local slaves –and the substantial free black population in the area– really did fight with and for Brown as asserted by Osborne Anderson and by Frederick Douglass, that was researched and published with new information in 1974 by Benjamin Quarles in ALLIES FOR FREEDOM. He cited the request for reparations from the slaveholder, William Fuller, who had hired Jim as a coachman to Lewis Washington (the famous sword of George Washington was surrendered to Osborne Anderson). He cited the denial of indemnity from the Commonwealth of Virginia because "he had joined the rebels with a good will" (page 100). He was armed, as was the free man of color who died with him, mentioned by Washington in his US Senate deposition as "a free man, visiting his wife," but otherwise unnamed – and described by him, of course, as an unwilling prisoner of Brown.

After the raid, the slaveholders of the area portrayed the local population as contented and fearful in order to contain further insurrection. The population distribution in the county, according to Stephen Oates in TO PURGE THIS LAND WITH BLOOD, was 9 whites to 1 black. To have fifty people participate, some die, some captured, some escape, and some melt back into the slave society was a strong indication of local support that would have grown had Brown not been surrounded.

When I began researching these fifty, inspired by Osborne Anderson's primary source account, the cover was cracked when I charted each local slave named in the indictment against Brown, who was convicted of conspiring with them to commit insurrection. Jim, Sam, Mason, and Catesby [the slaves of Lewis Washington]; Henry, Levi, Ben, Jerry, Phil, George, and Bill [the slaves of John Allstadt], and others unknown. These unknown I believe to have shown to be the slaves of George Turner, killed by Brown's army. Men of fighting age appear on the 1860 census as fugitive from his farm. He had probably come into Harpers Ferry to look for them. Their added numbers humanize the reported but unidentified dead on Brown's side, all in one area, in the Shenandoah River in a direct line to Turner's farm.

When names are placed with an historically anonymous group they can be found. Professor Quarles told me, when I asked him for advice in 1977, that there is always something new to be found.



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whites who had been so carefully taught to hate the nigger, by the simple expedient of forming into mobs and suddenly slaughtering all the black property of the rich whites of the South, would be able at last to drag our proud and righteous slavemasters down into the gutter with them?"

October 16, Sunday-October 18, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was working on his natural history materials.

ROSS/ADAMS COMMENTARY

The raid by the [John Brown](#) forces on the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#), Virginia involved 5 persons of color and 13 whites. Of the persons of color, 2 were killed during the raid, [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#) and [Shields Green](#) were captured and would be [hanged](#) and one managed to escape. That is to say, back from the West, Captain Brown committed the treason of attempting to free men and women from their rightful masters by seizing the weapons at the federal arsenal, and of course the owners of these men and women, who had a perfect right to resist being deprived of the use of their property, of course resisted being deprived, and therefore of course there were deaths during his raid upon this locale where the government to which he owed loyalty was manufacturing its weapons of slaughter. Although Brown did not effectively free the slaves of the sovereign state of Virginia –except of course that he freed those who listened to him and took up pikes and were gunned down– he was able effectively to sacrifice the lives of other people to his own enthusiasms. That has to count as a personal “win” of sorts! For instance, the 1st to be killed by the raiders at Harpers Ferry was

70. Joel Silbey has contended, in “The Civil War Synthesis in American History,” that postbellum American historians have been misconstruing antebellum American politics by viewing them in conjunction with our knowledge of the bloodbath that followed. It is only after the fact that we can “know” that the US Civil War amounted to a sectional dispute, North versus South. We avoid learning that before the fact, it was undecided whether this conflict was going to shape up as a race conflict, a class conflict, or a sectional conflict. We avoid knowing that the raid on Harpers Ferry might have resulted in a race war, in which peoples of color would be exterminated in order to create an all-white America, or might have resulted in a class war, in which the laboring classes might have first destroyed the plantation owners’ equity by killing his slaves, and then gone on to purge the nation of the white plantation owners themselves, with their privileged-class endowments.

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Hayward Shepard, a free black who happened to be in harm's way because he was serving as the baggage handler between the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad terminal and the Winchester & Harpers Ferry Railroad Terminal (the old man failed to respond appropriately to the raiders' orders). There were 21 fighters with Brown in the raid, and of these 10 were killed outright, 5 were captured for trial and would be hanged, and 7 escaped, of which 2 would later be captured and tried and hanged. Although the US government did effectively save the contents of their arsenal from these bold insurrectionaries, shortly thereafter the weapons of the arsenal would be seized by the insurrectionary Governor Wise of Virginia, who had as perfect a right to them as anyone, and he would distribute these weapons to [Confederate](#) troops.

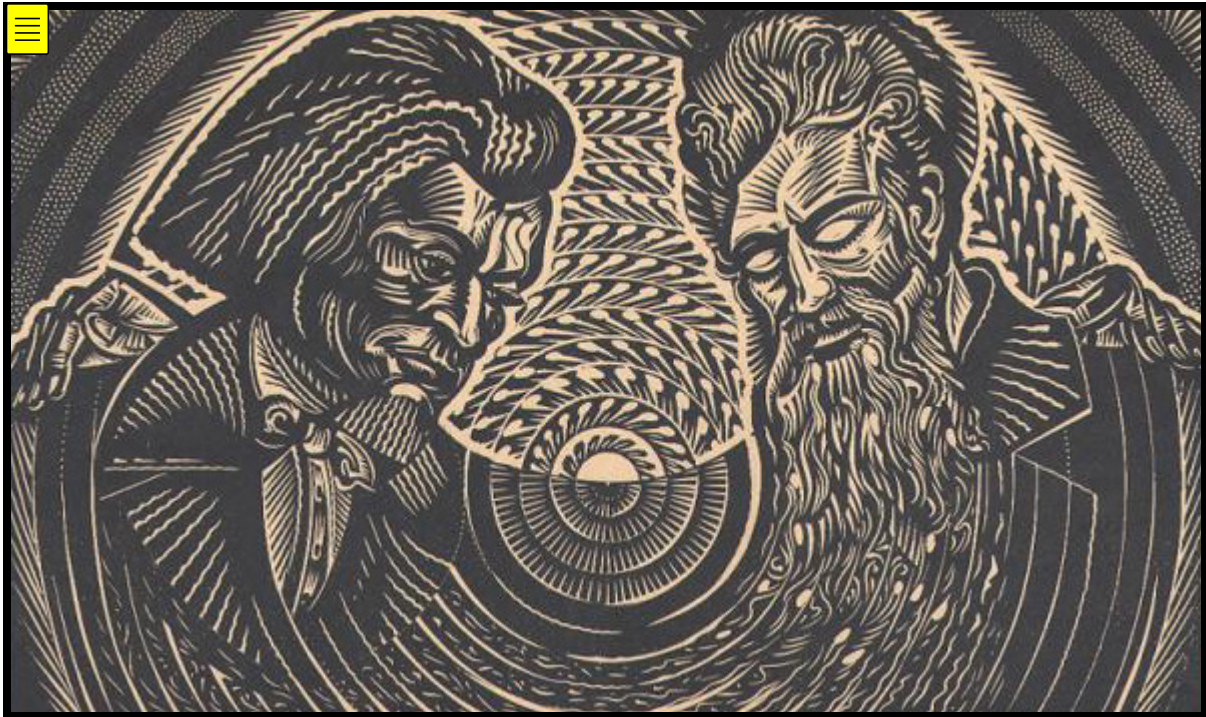


[NOTE: There was every reason to believe that if Governor Wise of Virginia could get his hands on [Frederick](#)

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
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Douglass, the black leader would hang alongside the white leader.



Douglass was at the moment in Philadelphia. The telegraph operator there would seek out Douglass and warn him, so that he would have three full hours in which to effect his escape — before the telegram ordering his arrest needed to be handed over to the local sheriff. Douglass, in fleeing went first to familiar haunts, the Hoboken, New Jersey lodgings of [Otilie Assing](#), and only from there to Rochester and then to Ontario, and



England. On the dock in Rochester, embarking for Ontario, William Parker would press into Douglass's hand what was purported to be the pistol dropped by Gorsuch  when he had been shot dead in Christiana (actually, it seems that the man had been unarmed with anything more deadly than a curiously foolish moral courage).]

This sort of situation has been described many times, and you will forgive me if I here repeat one of the early



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descriptions of this sort of situation:



More weapons, more murder.

-Lao Tzu

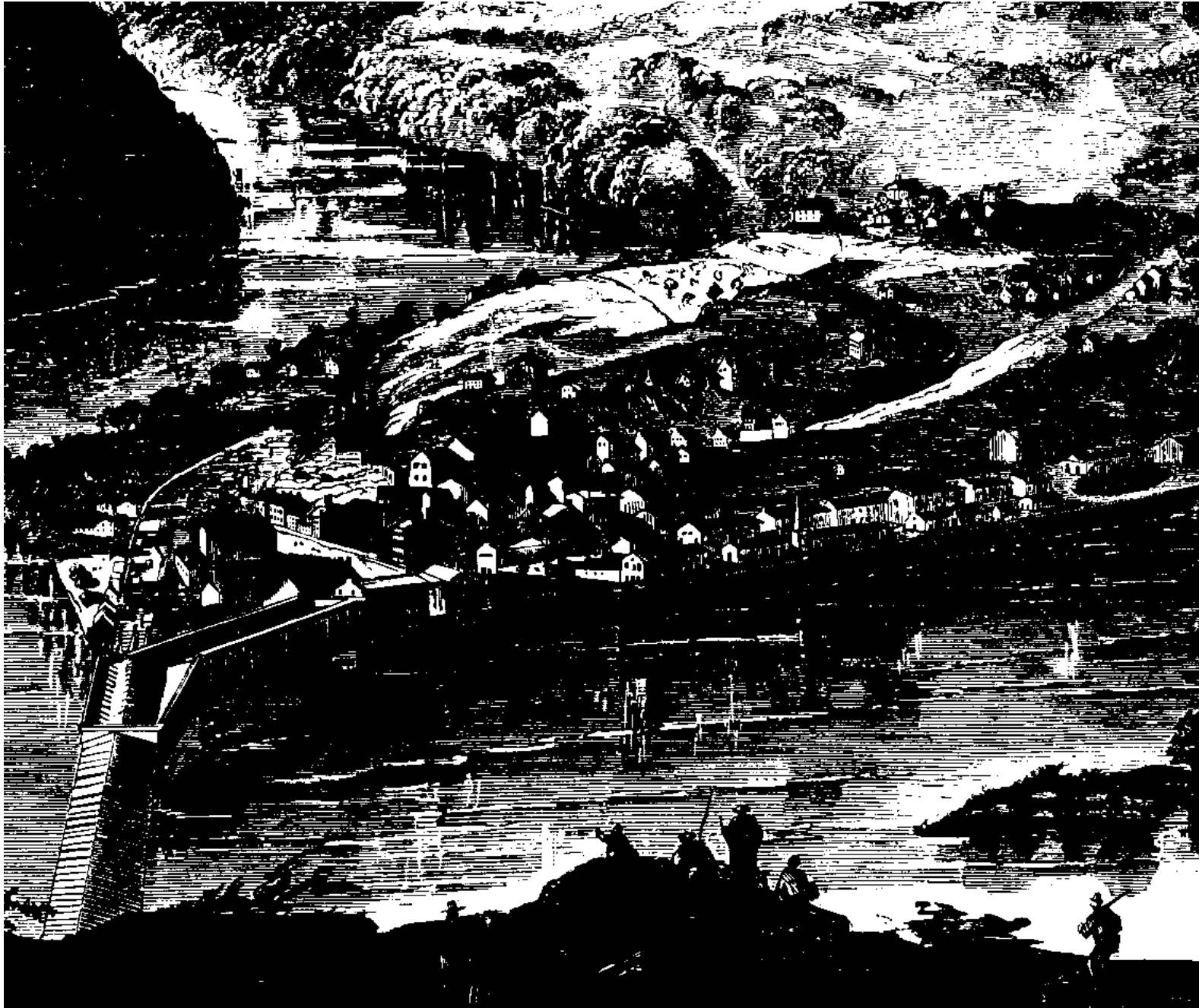
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Harpers Ferry from Brown's overlook in Maryland

Brown's Sharps carbine, his "[Henry Ward Beecher's Bible](#)," was captured with him after the [Harpers Ferry](#)

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skirmish, along with that famous [George Washington](#) sword he had just stolen from



← **George Washington's sword
(in the famous Leutze painting).**

a plantation, and to which he had as much right as its current owner (or, for that matter, its original owner).



After they would take Captain John Brown's Sharps rifle away from him at Harpers Ferry, they would allow this little boy to pose with it. Grow up, son, and be a Christian like us: kill people, own slaves.



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Although [Charles Plummer Tidd](#) opposed the attack on [Harpers Ferry](#), he nevertheless took part both in the



raid on the planter Washington's home and on the federal arsenal itself. He and [John Brown](#)'s son [Owen Brown](#) escaped, and made their way on foot toward the northwestern part of Pennsylvania.

(Tidd would visit Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Canada and take part in the planning for the rescue of [Aaron D. Stevens](#) and [Albert Hazlett](#) while the Mason Commission of the Congress was presuming that he had been killed in the fighting at the arsenal.)

[Owen Brown](#) was 35 at the time of the [Harpers Ferry](#) raid. He escaped on foot toward the northwestern part of Pennsylvania. It was due largely to his psychological grit, and physical endurance despite a withered arm, that the little group of survivors of which he was the leader did reach safety. He and [Charles Plummer Tidd](#) would find work and safety under assumed names, on an oil well crew in Crawford County, Pennsylvania. After the civil war he would grow grapes for some time in Ohio in association with two of his brothers, before migrating to [California](#). He would be the only one of the 5 escaped raiders not to participate in the civil war, and would be the last of the raiders when he died on January 9th, 1891 near Pasadena at his mountain home "Brown's Peak." He never married. A marble monument now marks his mountain grave.

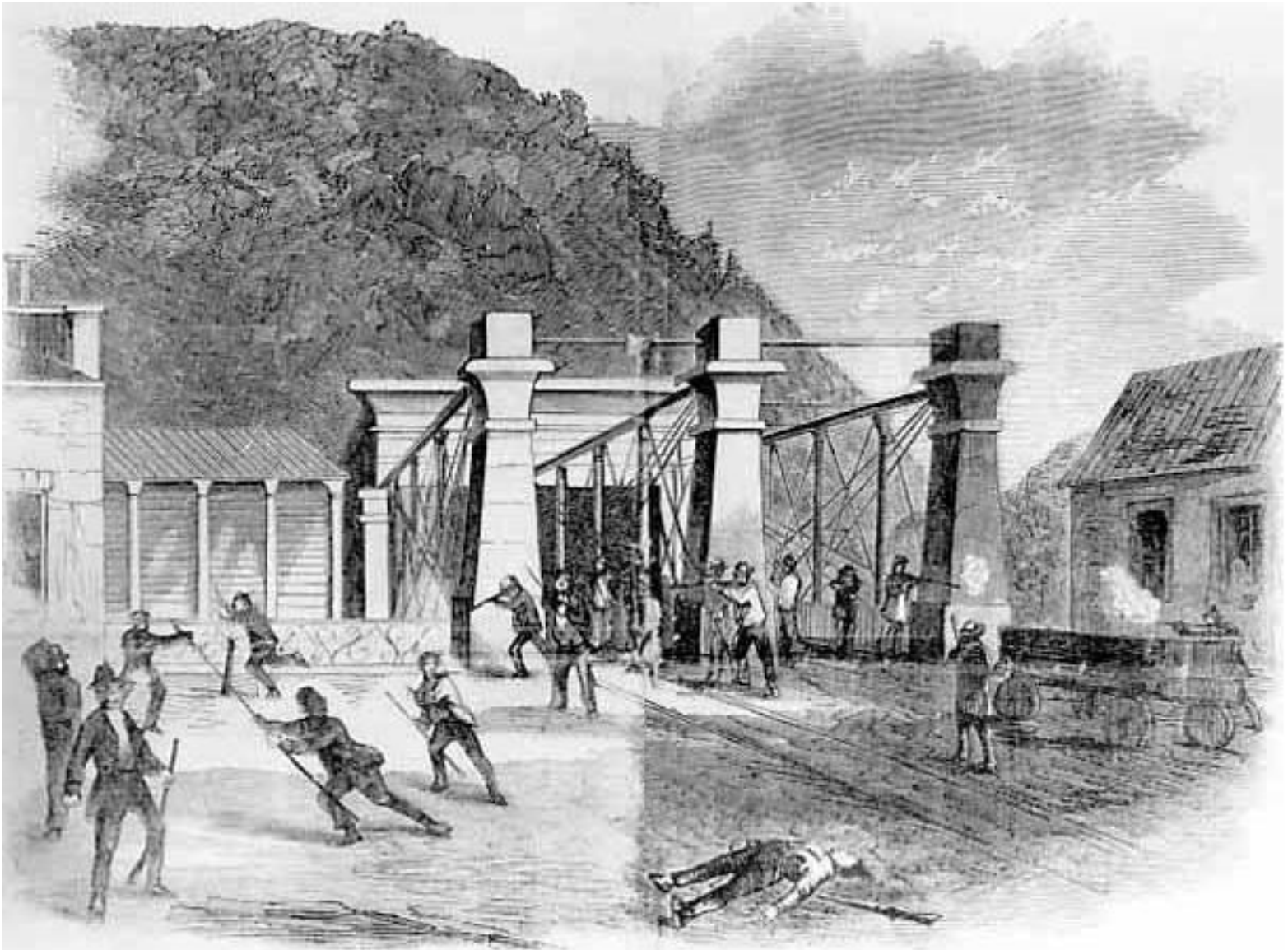


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Perhaps this white corpse is meant to be [Oliver Brown](#), usefully lying dead in the foreground of a contemporary news illustration? (This wouldn't have been a depiction of [Dangerfield Newby](#), also shot down at the bridge, since he was a very tall man with a splendid physique and since his mulatto body was abused by the attackers, who among other things snipped off its ears as trophies before they herded some hogs to root on it.)





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[John E. Cook](#) was sent out by Captain Brown to collect weapons, and instead climbed into a tree and observed the fight.



When [John Brown](#) sent his son [Watson Brown](#) out to negotiate, he was gunned down by the citizens of [Harpers Ferry](#).



(He would manage to crawl back to the shelter of the engine house and live on, groaning, his head cradled in [Edwin Coppoc](#)'s lap, for a considerable period. He would expire on October 18, 1859. His widow Isabella M. Thompson Brown would remarry with his brother [Salmon Brown](#).)

[John Henry Kagi](#) became trapped along with [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#) and [Lewis Sheridan Leary](#) in the armory called Hall's Rifle Works. When the three men made a run for it, heading down to the Shenandoah



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River, they came under a crossfire and Kagi was the first killed, his body being left to float in the river.



A monument would be erected by the citizens of [Oberlin, Ohio](#) in honor of their three free citizens of color who had died in the raid or been hanged, [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#), [Lewis Sheridan Leary](#), and [Shields Green](#) (the 8-foot marble monument would be moved to Vine Street Park in 1971).

Captain [John Brown](#) sent [William Thompson](#) out from the engine house to negotiate under flag of truce, and the mob of citizens placed him under arrest, took him to the local hotel barroom, discussed what to do, dragged him into the street, executed him by shooting him in the head, and dumped his body into the Potomac River.⁷¹

71. An interesting fact about this case is that it just about got a young lady into serious trouble. According to a letter of explanation she would provide to the local paper, Miss C.C. Fouke was the daughter of the tavernkeeper at [Harpers Ferry](#), operating at the local hotel. The story had gone around, after the fact, that on the 2d day of the raid in her father's saloon in the hotel she had thrown her body in front of this Brown conspirator [William Thompson](#) while the mob was debating whether or not to off him. Rather than be classed with Pocahontas or with [Florence Nightingale](#), Miss Fouke attempted to explain the rationale for her conduct to the public at large. She had indeed thrown her body between the mob and the captive, she freely confessed, but she had done so, she needed to point out, "without touching him," and she insisted also that her action was not motivated by any concern that this man was about to be shot in the head, but rather because her sister-in-law was resting in the next room and should not be disturbed as she was ailing — and/or out of a conviction that the man before being offed should be tried by a court of law.

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Thompson's brother [Dauphin Adolphus Thompson](#) also was killed during the raid.



Dauphin



William

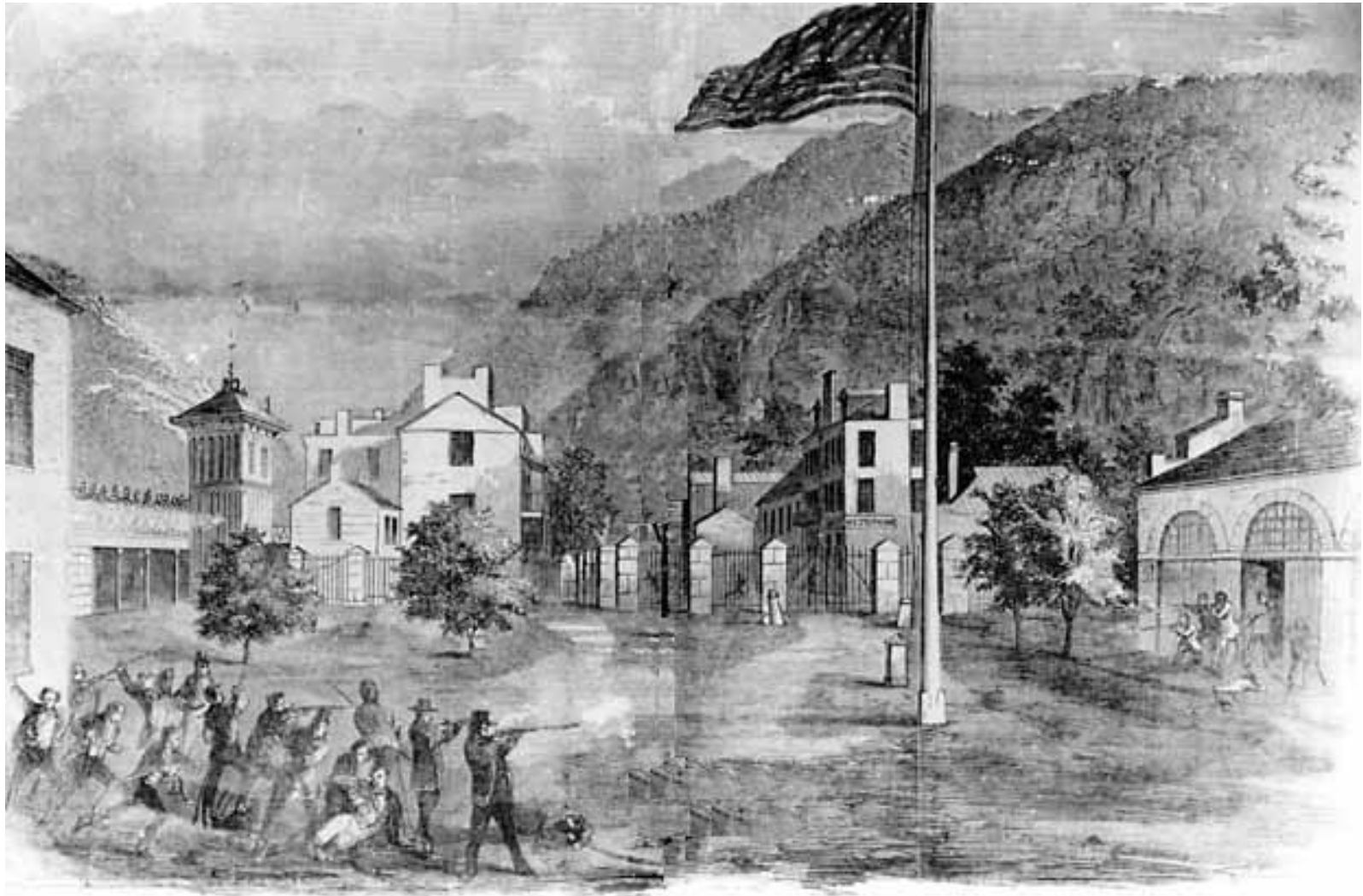
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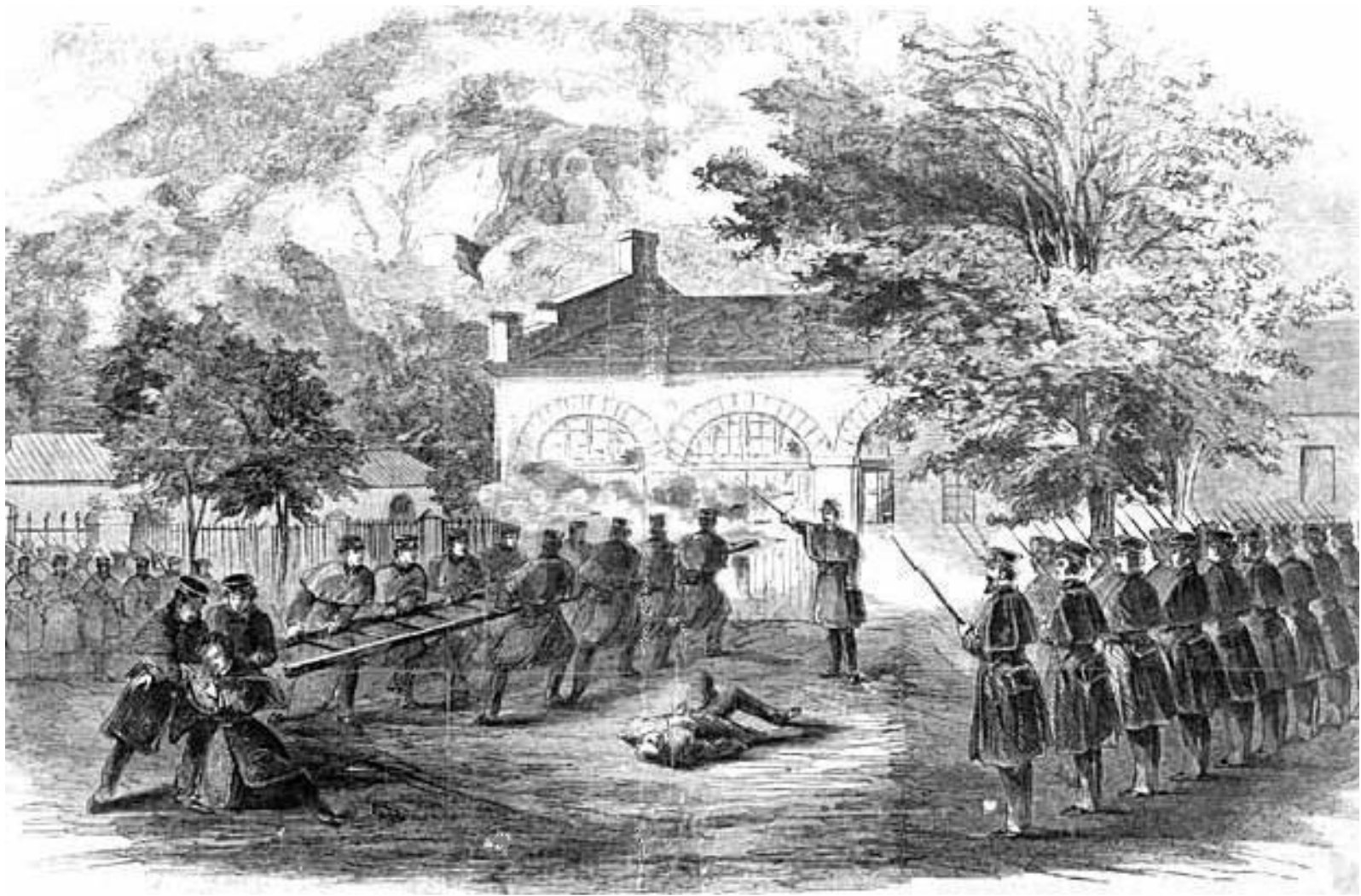
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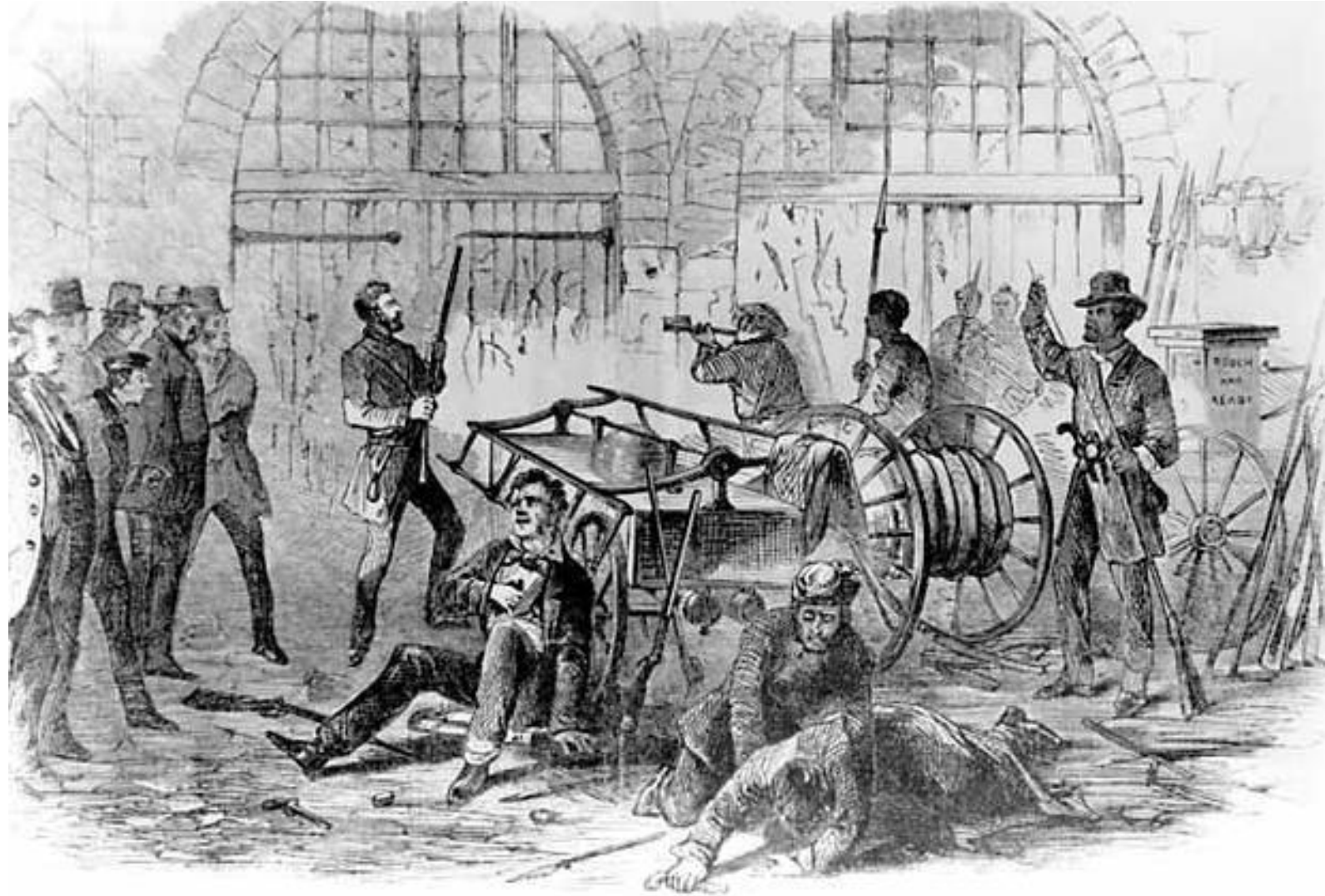
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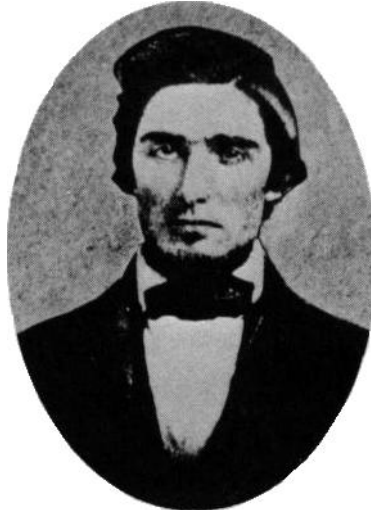


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[Jeremiah Goldsmith Anderson](#) was pinned against the wall by a bayonet-thrust of one of the Marines.



“One of the prisoners described Anderson as turning completely over against the wall in his dying agony. He lived a short time, stretched on the brick walk without, where he was subjected to savage brutalities, being kicked in body and face, while one brute of an armed farmer spat a huge quid of tobacco from his vile jaws into the mouth of the dying man, which he first forced open.” (You see, these people were incorrectly perceiving him to be not a white man but a light mulatto. When opportunistic medical students would go to transport his remains to their college in Winchester, Virginia for use as a dissection specimen, their treatment of this “light mulatto” corpse was so casual as to be recorded by a bystander: “In order to take him away handily they procured a barrel and tried to pack him into it. Head foremost, they rammed him in, but they could not bend his legs so as to get them into the barrel with the rest of the body. In their endeavor to accomplish this feat, they strained so hard that the man’s bones or sinews fairly cracked.”)

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In the engine house at Harpers Ferry, [Edwin Coppoc](#) surrendered with Captain [John Brown](#).



(He would be tried by a jury of his white male peers immediately after the conclusion of the trial of Captain Brown. He would be sentenced to death on November 2, 1859. From prison before his hanging, he would write to his adoptive mother, of a nonresistant-abolitionist [Quaker](#) farm family, that he was


“sorry to say that I was ever induced to raise a gun.”

He would be hung with [John E. Cook](#) on December 16, 1859. The body would be buried in Winona after a funeral attended by the entire town. Later the body would be reburied in Salem OH.)



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You will remember that in July 1854,  when [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) graduated from Harvard Theological School and was ordained, his classmate [William H. Leeman](#) had not graduated with him. This fellow had drunk some illicit alcohol Conway had smuggled onto campus and then refilled Conway's illicit bottles with water, and so student Conway had turned him in to the college administration. Leeman had been refused graduation on grounds of moral turpitude, and warned not to make any attempt to preach. At this point he reappears, or his mutilated body reappears — salvaged from the waters after being used for target practice, and thrown into the common pit on the bank of the Shenandoah River upstream from [Harpers Ferry](#).⁷²



72. See pages 87-8 and 240-1 of d'Entremont, where this account of Leeman was put together for the first time.



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[Barclay Coppoc](#) escaped from Harpers Ferry.



“We were together eight days before [[John E. Cook](#) and [Albert Hazlett](#) were] captured, which was near Chambersburg, and the next night Meriam [[Francis Jackson Meriam](#)] left us and went to Shippensburg, and there took cars for Philadelphia. After that there were but three of us left [[John Brown](#)’s son [Owen Brown](#), [Barclay Coppoc](#), and [Charles Plummer Tidd](#)], and we kept together, until we got to Centre County, Pennsylvania, where we bought a box and packed up all heavy luggage, such as rifles, blankets, etc., and after being together three or four weeks we separated and I went on through with the box to Ohio on the cars.” ([Osborn Perry Anderson](#), [Barclay Coppoc](#), and [Francis Jackson Meriam](#) would travel separately to safe exile in the area of [St. Catharines](#), Canada. [Barclay Coppoc](#) would go from there to Iowa, with Virginia agents in close pursuit. He would be back in Kansas in 1860, helping to run off some Missouri slaves, and would nearly lose his life in a 2d undertaking of this kind. On July 24, 1861 he would become a 1st Lieutenant in Colonel Montgomery’s regiment, the 3d Kansas Infantry. Eventually he would be killed by the fall of a train into the Platte river from a trestle forty feet high, the supports of which had been burned away by Confederates.)



[Francis Jackson Meriam](#) was not killed or captured in the raid on [Harpers Ferry](#) because he had been left at the

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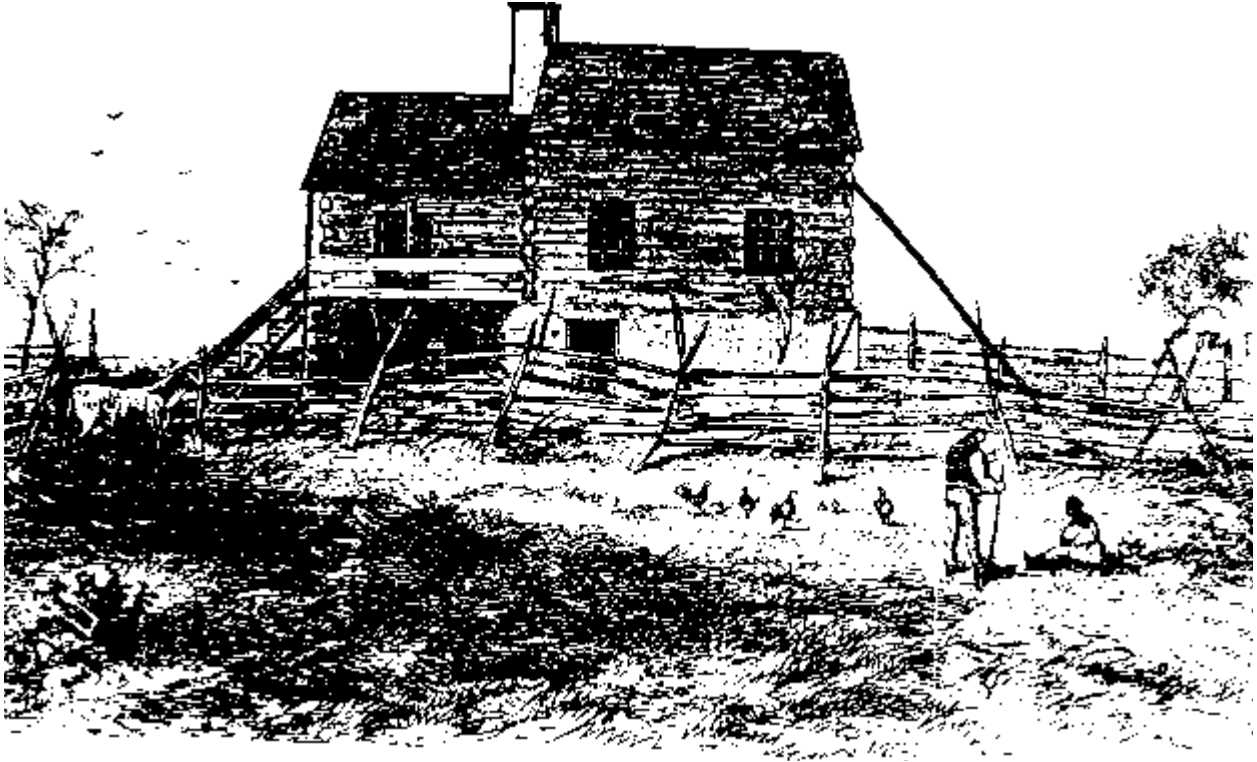
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Kennedy farmhouse, in one of his fits of despair.



He was a great drag on the other escapees as they hiked through the woods as he needed to stop and rest every

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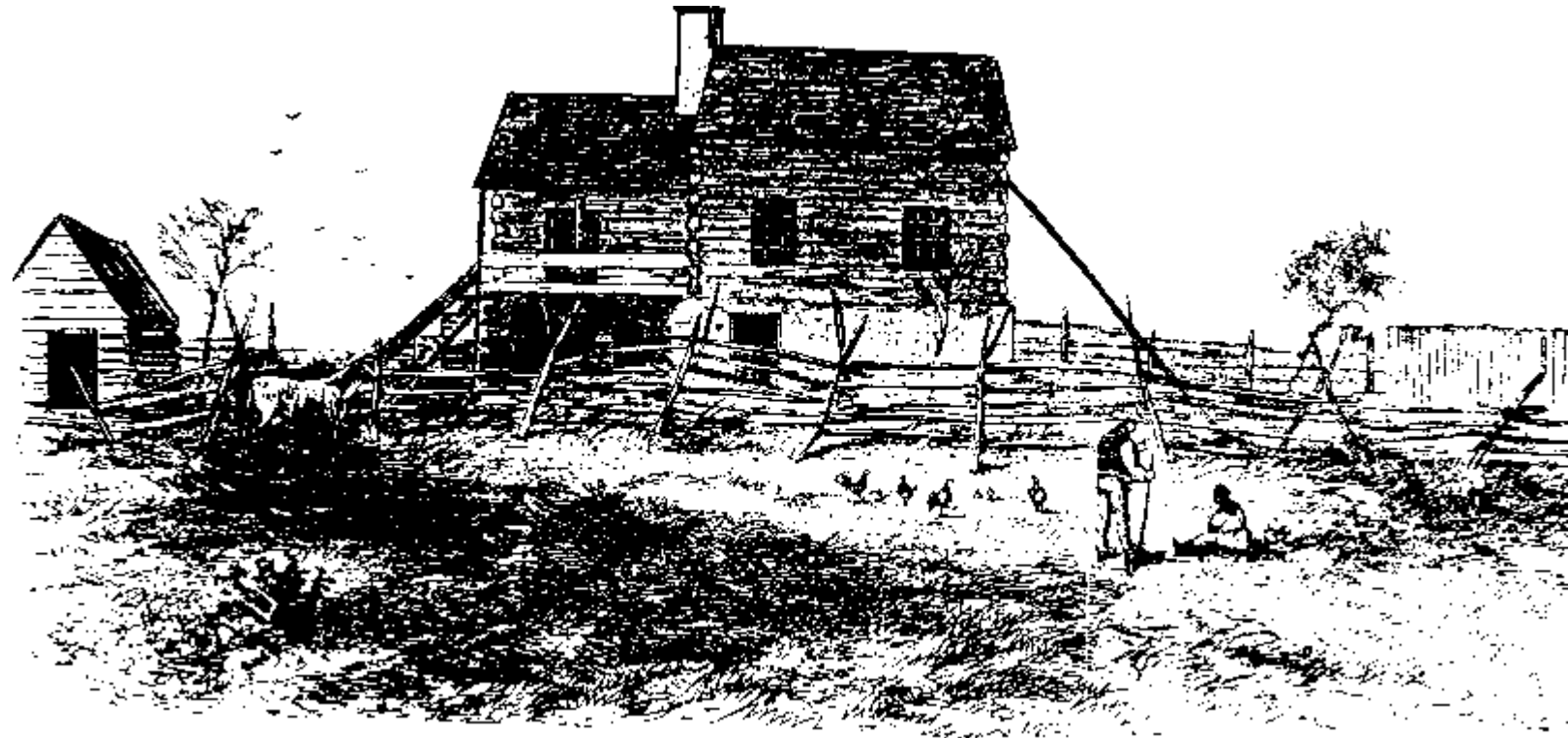
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mile or so.



To the great relief of the others, Meriam boarded a train in the town of Shippensburg heading for Philadelphia. Eventually [Thoreau](#) would put him on a train headed for Canada.

[Oliver Brown](#), the youngest of [John Brown](#)'s sons to reach adulthood, had been shot dead at the age of 20 while serving as a sentinel at the river bridge.



His and 9 other corpses left by the Provisional Army were "subjected to every indignity that a wild and madly excited people could heap upon them." A horrified reporter could only rationalize: "It may be thought that there was cruelty and barbarity in this; but the public mind had been frenzied by the outrages of these men,



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who, being outlaws, were regarded as food for carrion birds, and not as human creatures.” The corpses the Provisional Army needed burial but [Harpers Ferry](#) residents refused to allow their cemetery to be used for these who had sought to create servile insurrection. Two men, hired for \$5 from the public purse to dispose of the corpses, heaved the bodies into the bed of a common wagon –witnesses recalled the welter of sprawling limbs– and carted them over the bridge to the opposite bank of the Shenandoah River, where a burial site was selected on the bank half a mile above the town. Without any ceremony the corpses were dumped into a shallow common pit.

By a week after the execution of John Brown, our nation would be teetering on the edge of civil war. The disruption, however, was not directly related to John Brown’s raid upon the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#), but had to do instead with Helperism and its attitude of antislavery racism. The struggle was over the Speakership in the new US House of Representatives. Neither of the primary parties had the requisite 119 votes to win this position, and so a decision would be reachable only after there had been some considerable defection on one side or the other, from party discipline. The [Republicans](#) had proposed Representative John Sherman for this important position, and the Democrats were countering that no one who had endorsed Helperism, a concoction of recommended murder and treason, could possibly be considered for such a vital and influential role. If Representative Sherman got the job, the Southern states would be forced to withdraw their representatives from the halls of the US federal government. In endorsing [Hinton Rowan Helper](#)’s book during the spring of this year, the South’s attitude was, Sherman had endorsed treason and murder.

By the 2d day of the debate over the speakership, a linkage was being suggested between Helper’s ideas and [John Brown](#)’s actions. The illegality of the actions was coming to be considered to have been a direct expression of this strange belief system, according to which there was a “higher law” to which humans owed their primary obedience. The idea that there was a law higher than human law was considered an utterly presumptuous and iniquitous doctrine.



October 16. Sunday. P.M.– Paddle to Puffer’s and thence walk to Ledum Swamp and Conant’s Wood. A cold, clear, Novemberish day. The wind goes down and we do not sail. The button-bushes are just bare, and the black willows partly so, and the mikania all fairly gray now. I see the button-bush balls reflected on each side, and each wool-grass head and recurved withered sedge or rush is also doubled by the reflection. The *Scirpus lacustris* is generally brown, the *Juncus militaris* greener. It is rather too cool to sit still in the boat unless in a sunny and sheltered place. I have not been on the river for some time, and it is the more novel to me this cool day.

When I get to Willow Bay I see the new musquash-houses erected, conspicuous on the now nearly leafless shores. To me this is an important and suggestive sight, as, perchance, in some countries new haystacks in the yards; as to the Esquimaux the erection of winter houses. I remember this phenomenon annually for thirty years. A more constant phenomenon here than the new haystacks in the yard, for they were erected here probably before man dwelt here and may still be erected here when man has departed. For thirty years I have annually observed, about this time or earlier, the freshly erected winter lodges of the musquash along the riverside, reminding us that, if we have no gypsies, we have a more indigenous race of furry, quadrupedal men maintaining their ground in our midst still. This may not be an annual phenomenon to you. It may not be in the Greenwich almanac or ephemeris, but it has an important place in my Kalendar. So surely as the sun appears to be in Libra or Scorpio, I see the conical winter lodges of the musquash rising above the withered pontederia and flags. There will be some reference to it, by way of parable or otherwise, in *my* New Testament. Surely, it is a defect in our Bible that it is not truly ours, but a Hebrew Bible. The most pertinent illustrations for us are to be drawn, not from Egypt or Babylonia, but from New England.

Talk about learning our *letters* and being *literate*! Why, the roots of *letters* are *things*. Natural objects and phenomena are the original symbols or types which express our thoughts and feelings, and yet American scholars, having little or no root in the soil, commonly strive with all their might to confine themselves to the

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imported symbols alone. All the true growth and experience, the living speech, they would fain reject as "Americanisms." It is the old error, which the church, the state, the school ever commit, choosing darkness rather than light, holding fast to the old and to tradition. A more intimate knowledge, a deeper experience, will surely originate a word. When I really know that our river pursues a serpentine course to the Merrimack, shall I continue to describe it by referring to some other river no older than itself which is like it, and call it a *meander*? It is no more *meandering* than the Meander is *musketaquidding*. As well sing of the nightingale here as the Meander. What if there were a tariff on words, on language, for the encouragement of home manufactures? Have we not the genius to coin our own? Let the schoolmaster distinguish the true from the counterfeit.

They go on publishing the "chronological cycles" and "movable festivals of the Church" and the like from mere habit, but how insignificant are these compared with the annual phenomena of your life, which fall within your experience! The signs of the zodiac are not nearly of that significance to me that the sight of a dead sucker in the spring is. That is the occasion for an *immovable* festival in my church. Another kind of Lent then begins in my thoughts than you wot of. I am satisfied then to live on fish alone for a season.

Men attach a false importance to celestial phenomena as compared with terrestrial, as if it were more respectable and elevating to watch your neighbors than to mind your own affairs. The nodes of the stars are not the knots we have to untie. The phenomena of our year are one thing, those of the almanac another. For October, for



instance, instead of making the sun enter the sign of the scorpion, I would much sooner make him enter a musquash-house. Astronomy is a fashionable study, patronized by princes, but not fungi. "Royal Astronomer." The snapping turtle, too, must find a place among the constellations, though it may have to supplant some doubtful characters already there. If there is no place for him overhead, he can serve us bravely underneath, supporting the earth.

This clear, cold, Novemberish light is inspiriting. Some twigs which are bare and weeds begin to glitter with hoary light. The very edge or outline of a tawny or russet hill has this hoary light on it. Your thoughts sparkle like the water surface and the downy twigs. From the shore you look back at the silver-plated river.

Every rain exposes new arrowheads. We stop at Clamshell and dabble for a moment in the relics of a departed race.

Where we landed in front of Puffer's, found a jug which the haymakers had left in the bushes. Hid our boat there in a clump of willows, and though the ends stuck out, being a pale green and whitish, they were not visible or distinguishable at a little distance.

Passed through the sandy potato-field at Witherell's cellar-hole. Potatoes not dug; looking late and neglected



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now; the very vines almost vanished on some sandier hills.

When we emerged from the pleasant footpath through the birches into Witherell Glade, looking along it toward the westering sun, the glittering white tufts of the *Andropogon scoparius*, lit up by the sun, were affectingly fair and cheering to behold. It was already a cheerful Novemberish scene. A narrow glade stretching east and west between a dense birch wood, now half bare, and a ruddy oak wood on the upper side, a ground covered with tawny stubble and fine withered grass and cistuses. Looking westward along it, your eye fell on these lit tufts of andropogon [Vide Nov. 8th.], their glowing half raised a foot or more above the ground, a lighter and more brilliant whiteness than the downiest cloud presents (though seen on one side they are grayish) [Vide (by chance) same date, or October 16th, 1858].

Even the lespedezas stand like frost-covered wands, and now hoary goldenrods and some bright-red blackberry vines amid the tawny grass are in harmony with the rest; and if you sharpen and rightly intend your eye you see the gleaming lines of gossamer (stretching from stubble to stubble over the whole surface) which you are breaking. How cheerful these cold but bright white waving tufts! They reflect all the sun's light without a particle of his heat, or yellow rays. A thousand such tufts now catch up the sun and send to us its light but not heat. His heat is being steadily withdrawn from us. Light without heat is getting to be the prevailing phenomenon of the day now. We economize all the warmth we get now.

The frost of the 11th, which stiffened the ground, made new havoc with vegetation, as I perceive. Many plants have ceased to bloom, no doubt. Many *Diplopappus linariifolius* are gone to seed, and yellowish globes. Such are the stages in the year's decline. The flowers are at the mercy of the frosts. Places where *erechthites* grows, more or less bare, in sprout-lands, look quite black and white (black withered leaves and white down) and wintry.

At Ledum Swamp, feeling to find the *Vaccinium Oxycoccus* berries, I am struck with the coldness of the wet sphagnum, as if I put my hands into a moss in Labrador, – a sort of winter lingering the summer through there. To my surprise, now at 3.30 P.M., some of the sphagnum in the shade is still stiff with frost, and when I break it I see the glistening spiculae. This is the most startling evidence of winter as yet. For only on the morning of the 11th was there any stiffening of the ground elsewhere. Also in the high sedgey sprout-land south of this swamp, I see hoary or frost-like patches of sedge amid the rest, where all is dry; as if in such places (the lowest) the frost had completely bleached the grass so that it now looks like frost. I think that that is the case.

It is remarkable how, when a wood has been cut (perhaps where the soil was light) and frosts for a long while prevent a new wood from springing up there, that fine sedge (*Carex Pennsylvanica*?) will densely cover the ground amid the stumps and dead sprouts. It is the most hardy and native of grasses there. This is *the* grass of the sprout-lands and woods. It wants only the sun and a reasonably dry soil. Then there are the grasses and sedges of the meadows, but the cultivated fields and the pastures are commonly clothed with introduced grasses. The nesaea is all withered, also the woodwardia. The ledum and *Andromeda Polifolia* leaves have fallen. The *Kalmia glauca* is still falling. The spruce, also, has fallen.

The ledum smells like a bee, – that peculiar scent they have. C., too, perceives it.

See a hairy woodpecker on a burnt pitch pine. He distinctly rests on his tail constantly. With what vigor he taps and bores the bark, making it fly far and wide, and then darts off with a sharp whistle!

I remark how still it is to-day, really Sabbath-like. This day, at least, we do not hear the rattle of cars nor the whistle. I cannot realize that the country was often as still as this twenty years ago.

Returning, the river is perfectly still and smooth. The broad, shallow water on each side, bathing the withered grass, looks as if it were ready to put on its veil of ice at any moment. It seems positively to invite the access of frost. I seem to hear already the creaking, shivering sound of ice there, broken by the undulations my boat makes. So near are we to winter. Then, nearer home, I hear two or three song sparrows on the button-bushes sing as in spring, – that memorable tinkle, – as if it would be last as it was first.

The few blackish leaves of *pontederia* rising above the water now resemble ducks at a distance, and so help to conceal them now that they are returning.

The weeds are dressed in their frost jackets, naked down to their close-fitting downy or flannel shirts. Like athletes they challenge the winter, these bare twigs. This cold refines and condenses us. Our spirits are strong, like that pint of cider in the middle of a frozen barrel.

The cool, placid, silver-plated waters at even coolly await the frost. The musquash is steadily adding to his winter lodge. There is no need of supposing a peculiar instinct telling him how high to build his cabin. He has had a longer experience in this river-valley than we. Evergreens, I should say, fall early, both the coniferous and the broad-leaved.

That election-cake fungus which is still growing (as for some months) appears to be a *Boletus*.

I love to get out of cultivated fields where I walk on an imported sod, on English grass, and walk in the fine sedge of woodland hollows, on an American sward. In the former case my thoughts are heavy and lumpish, as





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if I fed on turnips. In the other I nibble groundnuts.

Your hands begin to be cool, rowing, now. At many a place in sprout-lands, where the sedge is peculiarly flat and white or hoary, I put down my hand to feel if there is frost on it. It must be the *trace* of frost. Since the frost of the 11th, the grass and stubble has received another coat of tawny.

That andropogon bright feathery top may be put with the clematis seed and tail. Only this cold, clear sky can light them up thus.

The farmer begins to calculate how much longer he can safely leave his potatoes out.

Each ball of the button-bush reflected in the silvery water by the riverside appears to me as distinct and important as a star in the heavens viewed through "optic glass." This, too, deserves its Kepler and Galileo.

As nature generally, on the advent of frost, puts on a russet and tawny dress, so is not man clad more in harmony with nature in the fall in a tawny suit or the different hues of Vermont gray? I would fain see him glitter like a sweet-fern twig between me and the sun.

A few green yellow lily pads lie on the surface waiting to be frozen in. All the *Lycopodium complanatum* I see to-day has shed its pollen.

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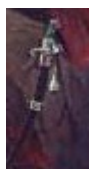
October 17, Monday: Plantation owner Lewis W. Washington met [John E. Cook](#) again, when he, accompanied by [Aaron D. Stevens](#), [Stewart Taylor](#), and [Charles Plummer Tidd](#), appeared heavily armed at night at the door to his bedroom. Outside the mansion, [Shields Green](#), who had been [Frederick Douglass](#)'s bodyguard, was standing watch.



It turned out to be [Stevens](#) who was in charge of this looting and kidnapping party: "You are our prisoner." After collecting the pistol which the Marquis de Lafayette had presented to General Washington and the sword which Frederick the Great of Prussia had presented to him, the raiders also displayed an unseemly interest in Lewis's watch, of no historical relevance, and in any ready cash he might happen to have lying around his home.

RACE WAR,

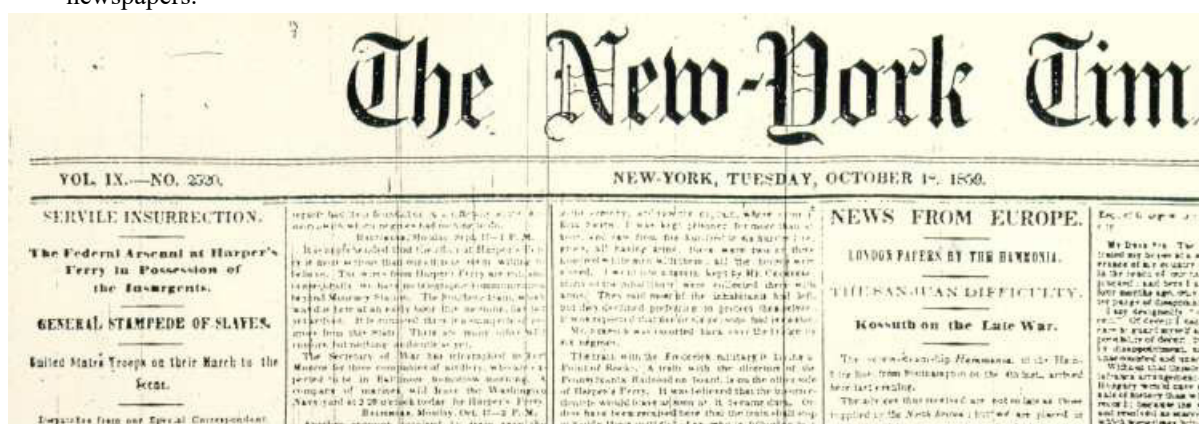
NOT CIVIL WAR



← George Washington's sword (in the famous Leutze painting).



The news of the raid on the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#) was beginning at this point to appear in some newspapers.



While [Frederick Douglass](#) was lecturing at Philadelphia on the topic of "Self-Made Men," his oration was interrupted by arrival of the news of an abolitionist raid upon the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Within a week he would be forced to hurry to Canada to evade arrest on the very accurate charge of his having

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been a [John Brown](#) accomplice with prior guilty knowledge of the treason.



A note from Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) in Richmond, Virginia to Colonel George W. Munford:



Richmond Va
 Oct[ober] 17th 1859
 To Col[onel]. Geo[rge]. W. Munford
 Dear Sir

Called away by a sudden emergency, occasion may arise in reference to the service in and & other matters, for official signatures, & you are hereby authorized to act, by signing my name & doing all other acts necessary to be done in the office of Gov[ernor] in my absence.

Y[ours] truly
 Henry A. Wise



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Francisco has had the following to offer in regard to the participation of local African Americans in the vicinity of Harpers Ferry during John Brown's raid. She uses [Osborn Perry Anderson](#)'s A VOICE FROM HARPER'S FERRY, written in 1860, as the basis of her research. The only specific deaths (the ultimate test of joining) of local slaves and free blacks are those in at least two primary sources. She published these in 1979 in BLACK VOICES FROM HARPER'S FERRY. There is also "Mean To Be Free: John Brown's Black Nation Campaign," a videotape. These are referenced in FROM SLAVERY TO SALVATION: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF REV. THOMAS W. HENRY OF THE A.M.E. CHURCH," UP of Mississippi:

The local slaves –and the substantial free black population in the area– really did fight with and for Brown as asserted by Osborne Anderson and by Frederick Douglass, that was researched and published with new information in 1974 by Benjamin Quarles in ALLIES FOR FREEDOM. He cited the request for reparations from the slaveholder, William Fuller, who had hired Jim as a coachman to Lewis Washington (the famous sword of George Washington was surrendered to Osborne Anderson). He cited the denial of indemnity from the Commonwealth of Virginia because "he had joined the rebels with a good will" (page 100). He was armed, as was the free man of color who died with him, mentioned by Washington in his US Senate deposition as "a free man, visiting his wife," but otherwise unnamed – and described by him, of course, as an unwilling prisoner of Brown.

After the raid, the slaveholders of the area portrayed the local population as contented and fearful in order to contain further insurrection. The population distribution in the county, according to Stephen Oates in TO PURGE THIS LAND WITH BLOOD, was 9 whites to 1 black. To have fifty people participate, some die, some captured, some escape, and some melt back into the slave society was a strong indication of local support that would have grown had Brown not been surrounded.

When I began researching these fifty, inspired by Osborne Anderson's primary source account, the cover was cracked when I charted each local slave named in the indictment against Brown, who was convicted of conspiring with them to commit insurrection. Jim, Sam, Mason, and Catesby [the slaves of Lewis Washington]; Henry, Levi, Ben, Jerry, Phil, George, and Bill [the slaves of John Allstadt], and others unknown. These unknown I believe to have shown to be the slaves of George Turner, killed by Brown's army. Men of fighting age appear on the 1860 census as fugitive from his farm. He had probably come into Harpers Ferry to look for them. Their added numbers humanize the reported but unidentified dead on Brown's side, all in one area, in the Shenandoah River in a direct line to Turner's farm.

When names are placed with an historically anonymous group they can be found. Professor Quarles told me, when I asked him for advice in 1977, that there is always something new to be found.

Harpers Ferry residents George Mauzy and Mary Mauzy wrote to their daughter Eugenia Mauzy Burton and son-in-law James H. Burton, who were then living in England (Burton had been a machinist, foreman, and Acting Master Armorer at the Harpers Ferry Armory between 1844-1854):

To Eugenia Burton, Enfield, England



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October 17, 1859

Monday afternoon

4 o'clock

Oh my dear friend such a day as this. Heaven forbid that I should ever witness such another.

Last night a band of ruffians took possession of the town, took the keys of the armory and made Captive a great many of our Citizens. I cannot write the particulars for I am too Nervous. For such a sight as I have just beheld. Our men chased them in the river just below here and I saw them shot down like dogs. I saw one poor wretch [sic] rise above the water and some one strike him with a club he sank again and in a moment they dragged him out a Corpse. I do not know yet how many are shot but I shall never forget the sight. They just marched two wretches [sic] their Arms bound fast up to the jail. My dear husband shouldered his rifle and went to join our men May god protect him. Even while I write I hear the guns in the distance I heard they were fighting down the street.

I cannot write any more I must wait and see what the end will be. -M.E. Mauzy

Page 494 of Henry Mayer's ALL ON FIRE: On Monday evening, October 17, 1859, Wendell Phillips called at Dix Place and spent an entertaining hour with [William Lloyd Garrison](#) and his son Willie merrily going over the poor showing Henry Ward Beecher had made in his Tremont Temple lecture on "bargain-making" a few days previously. The mood changed abruptly, however, when someone came in with a bulletin about a slave uprising in Virginia. One question sprang into their minds simultaneously -"Osawatomie Brown?"- and they looked at each other with "foreboding," Willie remembered, as the answer came, "Very like." (Willie kept to himself his own worst suspicion that Francis Meriam was involved, but wrote in his diary that his friend was "just reckless enough" to have become mixed up in such a business.)



October 17: A smart frost this morning. Ground stiffened. Hear of ice in a tub.

P.M.- To Gowing's Swamp.

The water standing over the road at Moore's Swamp, I see the sand spotted black with many thousands of little snails with a shell, and two feelers out, slowly dragging themselves over the bottom. They reminded me by their color, number, and form of the young tadpoles.

I look for *Vaccinium Oxycoccus* in the swamp. The uneven surface of the sphagnum in which the slender vine grows comes up to my idea of a mountainous country better than many actual mountains that I have seen. Labrador mountains these are at least. The higher patches of sphagnum are changed to a dark purple, which shows a crude green where you crack it by your weight. The lower parts are yet yellowish-green merely. These interesting little cranberries are quite scarce, the vine bearing (this year, at least) only amid the higher and drier sphagnous mountains amid the lowest bushes about the edge of the open swamp. There the dark-red berries (quite ripe) now rest, on the shelves and in the recesses of the red sphagnum. There is only enough of these



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THANKSGIVING

berries for sauce to a botanist's Thanksgiving dinner.

What I put into my pocket, whether berry or apple, generally has to keep company with an arrowhead or two. I hear the latter chinking against a key as I walk. These are the perennial crop of Concord fields. If they were sure it would pay, we should see farmers raking the fields for them.

The rain drives me from my berrying and we take shelter under a tree. It is worth the while to sit under the lee of an apple tree trunk in the rain, if only to study the bark and its inhabitants. I do not disturb the father-long-legs which to avoid the storm has merely got round to the lee side, or under the shelter of an excrescence. Thus easily insects find their roof ready for them. Man's very size compels him to build a house. Caves and recesses big enough are too rare.

Why should we not stay at home? This is the land and we are the inhabitants so many travellers come to see. Why should we suffer ourselves to drift outside and lose all our advantages? They were bold navigators once who merely sighted these shores. We were born and bred further in the land than Captain John Smith got.

I hear that ten geese went over New Bedford some days ago.

When La Mountain and Haddock dropped down in the Canada wilderness the other day, they came near starving, or dying of cold and wet and fatigue, not knowing where to look for food nor how to shelter themselves. Thus far we have wandered from a simple and independent life. I think that a wise and independent, self-reliant man will have a complete list of the edibles to be found in a primitive country or wilderness, a bill of fare, in his waistcoat pocket at least, to say nothing of matches and warm clothing, so that he can commence a systematic search for them without loss of time. They might have had several frogs apiece if they had known how to find them. Talk about tariffs and protection of home industry, so as to be prepared for wars and hard times!! Here we are, deriving our breadstuffs from the West, our butter stuffs from Vermont, and our tea and coffee and sugar stuffs, and much more with which we stuff ourselves, from the other side of the globe. Why, a truly prudent man will carry such a list as the above, in his mind at least, even though he walk through Broadway or Quincy Market. He will know what are the permanent resources of the land and be prepared for the hardest of times. He will go behind cities and their police; he will see through them. Is not the wilderness of mould and dry-rot forever invading and threatening them? They are but a camp abundantly supplied today, but gnawing their old shoes to-morrow. [Why, a philosopher who soars higher than usual in his thoughts from time to time drops down into what is just such a wilderness to him as that was to La Mountain and Haddock, where he finds hardly one little frog gone into winter quarters to sustain him and runs screaming toward the climes of the sun.] I see all the farmers' old coats spread over the few squashes and pumpkins still left out in a pile. The arbor-vitae sheds seeds; how long?

HDT

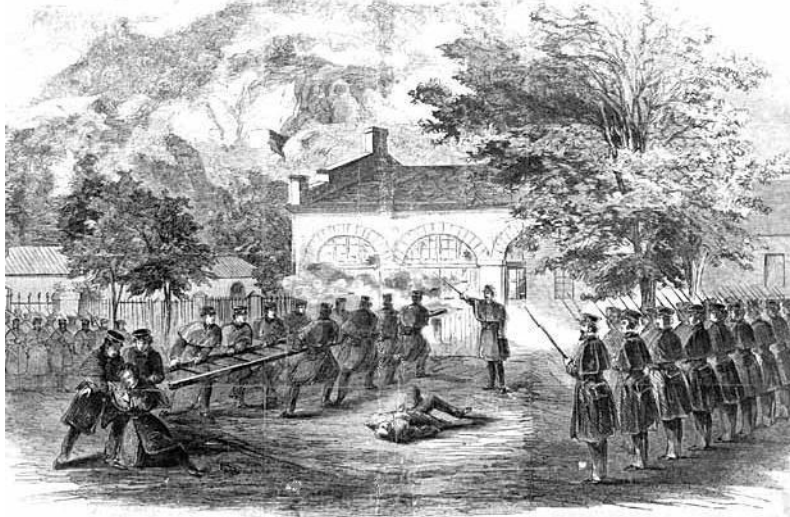
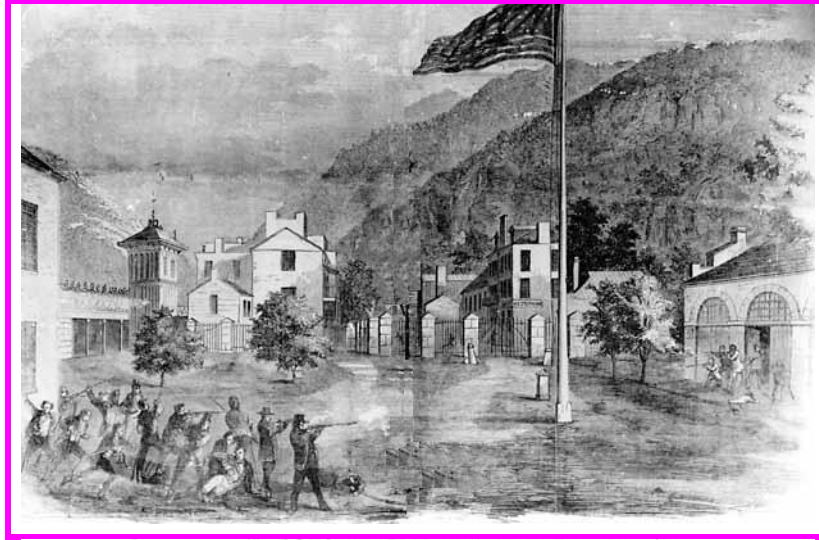
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October 18, Tuesday: At break of day, [John Brown](#) surrendered to the 86 US Marines under the command of 1st Lieutenant Israel Green, USMC, and Lieutenant-Colonel [Robert E. Lee](#), USA. He had sent his son [Watson Brown](#) out to parley under a white flag and the son had been gut-shot by the citizens of [Harpers Ferry](#).



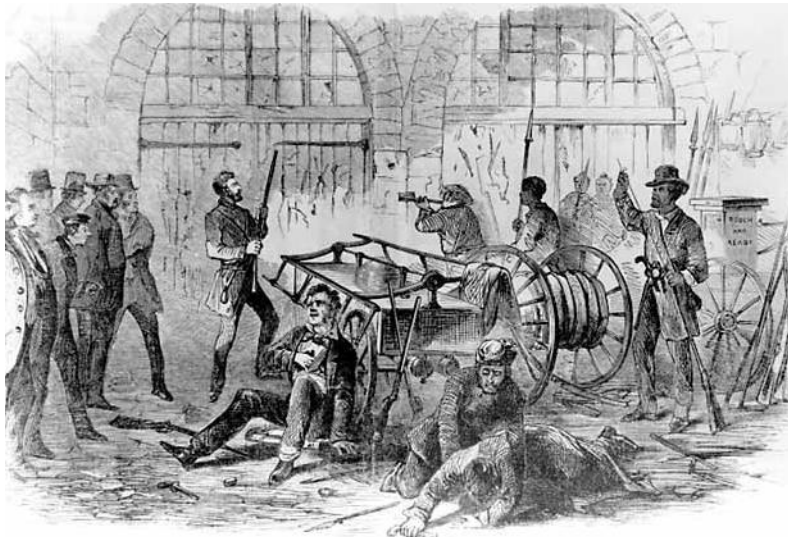
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He had managed to crawl back to the shelter of the engine house and live on, groaning, his head cradled in [Edwin Coppoc](#)'s lap, but would soon expire.



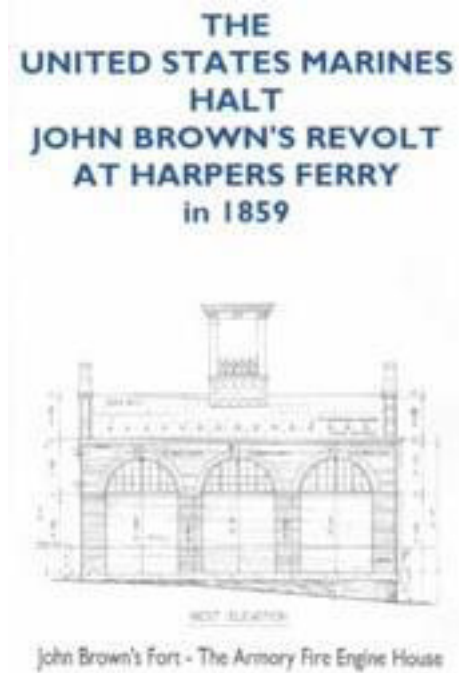
(His widow Isabella M. Thompson Brown would remarry with his brother [Salmon Brown](#).)



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Eventually, the USMC would be putting out an official historical pamphlet about this capture:



The New-York Herald's article on this day cut straight to the primal white fear, of an "Extensive Negro



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Conspiracy in Virginia and [Maryland](#)”:

FEARFUL AND EXCITING INTELLIGENCE.
~~~~~  
**NEGRO INSURRECTION AT HARPER'S FERRY.**  
~~~~~  
**Extensive Negro Conspiracy in
Virginia and Maryland.**
~~~~~  
**Seizure of the United States Arsenal  
by the Insurrectionists.**  
~~~~~  
**Arms Taken and Sent into the
Interior.**
~~~~~  
**The Bridge Fortified and Defended  
by Cannon.**  
~~~~~  
Trains Fired into and Stopped---Several Per-
sons Killed---Telegraph Wires Cut---
Contributions Levied on the Citizens.
~~~~~  
Troops Despatched Against the Insurgents  
from Washington and Baltimore,  
**&c.,            &c.,            &c.**



Lest we suppose this “[servile insurrection](#)” thingie to have been a phenomenon confined to the tabloid press,



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here is the comparison front-page headline of the New-York Times:



The news of the raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry was in all newspapers by this day's edition.

Town residents George Mauzy and Mary Mauzy wrote again to their daughter Eugenia Mauzy Burton and son-in-law James H. Burton, who were then living in England (Burton had been a machinist, foreman, and Acting Master Armorer at the Harpers Ferry Armory between 1844-1854):

To Eugenia Burton, Enfield, England

October 18, 1859

This has been one of the saddest days that Harper's Ferry ever experienced. This morning, when the armorers went to the shops to go to work, lo and behold, the shops had been taken possession of by a set of abolitionists and the doors were guarded by Negroes with rifles. —George Mauzy

At his capture, a document in Captain John Brown's handwriting was found in his clothing. The document listed the Chatham, Canada signatories to "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States."

Henry Thoreau was written a commercial letter:

*Cambridge Aug 18  
Mr Thoreau  
Dear Sir  
Inclosed  
please find \$15 00 for  
which send us 10 #s  
Blacklead by return of*

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*express—directed as  
usual  
Yours truly  
Welch, Bigelow, & C<sup>o</sup>  
Aug 18.*



October 18. Rains till 3 P. M., but is warmer.

P. M.—To Assabet, front of Tarbell's.

Going by Dennis Swamp on railroad, the sour scent of decaying ferns is now very strong there. *Rhus venenata* is bare, and maples and some other shrubs, and more are very thin-leaved, as alder and birches, so that the swamp, with so many fallen leaves and migrating sparrows, etc., flitting through it, has a very late look.

For falling, put the canoe birch with the small white. The beach plum is almost quite bare. The leaves of a chinquapin oak have not fallen. The long, curved, yellowish buds of the *Salix discolor* begin to show, the leaves falling; even the down has peeped out from under some.

In the ditch along the west side of Dennis Swamp I see half a dozen yellow-spot turtles moving about. Probably they are preparing to go into winter quarters.

I see one of the smaller thrushes to-day.

Saw a tree-toad on the ground in a sandy wood-path. It did not offer to hop away, may have been chilled by the rain (?). It is marked on the back with black, somewhat in the form of the hylodes.

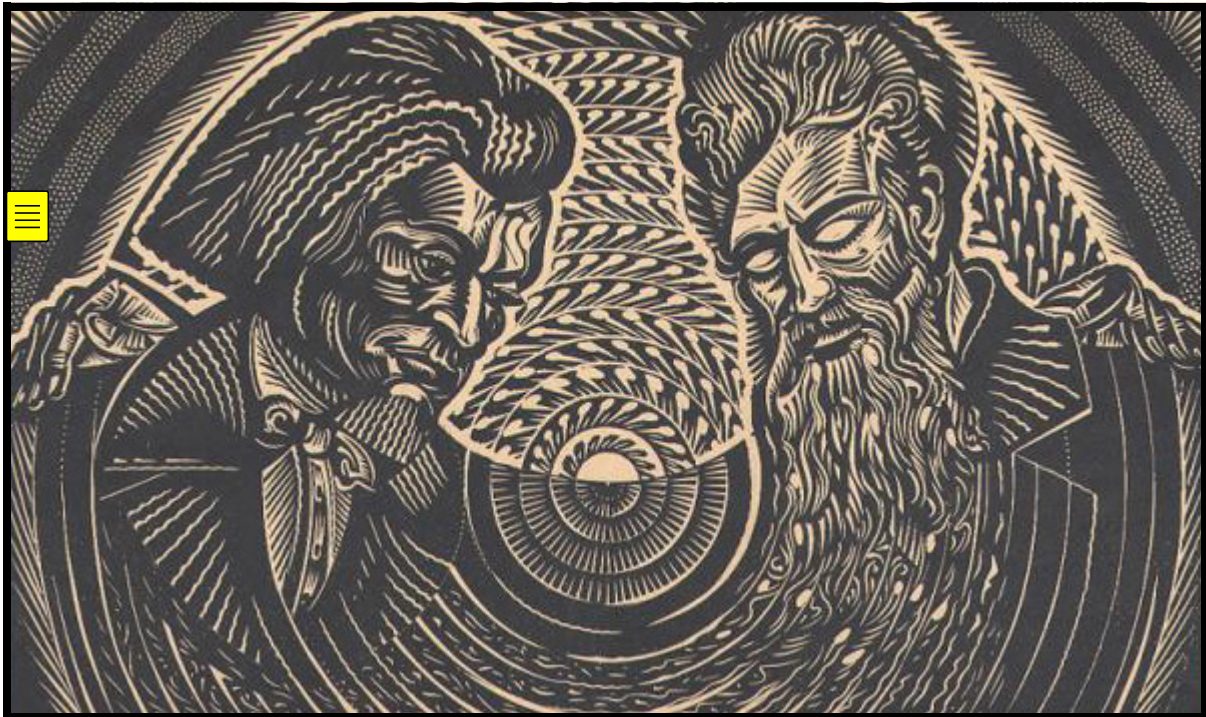
Why can we not oftener refresh one another with original thoughts? If the fragrance of the *dicksonia* fern is so grateful and suggestive to us, how much more refreshing and encouraging—re-creating—would be fresh and fragrant thoughts communicated to us fresh from a man's experience and life! I want none of his pity, nor sympathy, in the common sense, but that he should emit and communicate to me his essential fragrance, that he should not be forever repenting and going to church (when not otherwise sinning), but, as it were, going a-



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huckleberrying in the fields of thought, and enrich all the world with his visions and his joys. Why do you flee so soon, sir, to the theatres, lecture-rooms, and museums of the city? If you will stay here awhile I will promise you strange sights. You shall walk on water; all these brooks and rivers and ponds shall be your highway. You shall see the whole earth covered a foot or more deep with purest white crystals, in which you slump or over which you glide, and all the trees and stubble glittering in icy armor.



I have primarily concerned myself as a historian with the servile insurrection that the white man "Captain" John Brown (AKA "Nelson Hawkins") was attempting to instigate at the Harpers Ferry federal arsenal in 1859, a servile insurrection in regard to which he was expecting that he would be able to manipulate Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman into fronting for him. My contention will be that normal academic history writing is retrospective in nature, done in an awareness of actual outcomes and consumed by an audience driven by presentist concerns, and that as a result of this "ante-knowledge" (to coin a term), normal academic history writing presents an incomplete picture of the alternatives that had beforehand been available. Specifically, the fact that this Harpers Ferry situation resolved itself into a sectional Civil War, and that what our academic historians now know about is this fratricidal sectional struggle that actually did come about, is causing them to overlook the raw fact that the situation might well have resolved itself instead into a racial genocide similar to the one that actually occurred in our northern coastlands in 1675/1676, known as "King Phillip's War" or might well have resolved





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itself instead into a class struggle similar to the one that almost occurred in the our coastal southlands in 1675/1676, known as "[Bacon's Rebellion](#)" –and that for many of the white Americans who had some advance knowledge of what John Brown was planning, such a racial genocide or such a class struggle would have been much to be preferred over our actual "civil war" brother-against-brother, white-on-white fratricide –this servile insurrection which Captain Brown was attempting to initiate, followed inevitably by a racial genocide, must have been a very acceptable outcome in their contemplation, an outcome that would have solved what they regarded as America's "negro problem" – resolved it once and for all.

America has had a series of race wars, first the war upon the [Pequot](#) tribe, then what is termed "[King Phillip's War](#)," then the attempt at servile insurrection by [Nat Turner](#) that was nipped in the bud in Virginia, then the attempt at servile insurrection by [Denmark Vesey](#) that was nipped in the bud in South Carolina, then the "Sioux Uprising" under [Little Crow](#) in Minnesota, then the "[Ghost Dancers](#)," etc. These struggles have always worked out very well for our white people, who always triumph in the end. So why are we so sure –given the unchallenged fact that the Secretary of War had been amply prewarned– that Captain Brown's plot was one that had been entirely unexpected by the US federal government, sprung as a surprise, a deep dark conspiracy?

It seems to me very plausible, given the number of people who had one or another piece of advance knowledge of what Brown was up to, that this thing actually came about not because it was unexpected and unwanted, but because it was very much expected and very much wanted.

(You know, and I know, that [President George W. Bush](#) was briefed beforehand on the likelihood that Osama bin Laden would strike somewhere somehow soon inside the United States of America, and you know and I know that "W" did nothing whatever with this information, just as [Secretary of War John Buchanan Floyd](#) in 1859 did nothing whatever with the information that John Brown was going to attack a federal arsenal in order to seize weapons in order to stage a servile insurrection. You know, and I know, also, that the [NeoCons](#) already had an office in the Pentagon, in which they were developing a laundry list of must-do items which they were going to spring on the citizenry the moment we were infuriated by an attack upon our nation – must-get-done items such as our seemed-like-a-good-idea-at-the-time invasion of Iraq. Of what relevance, therefore, is the conceit that the attack on the Twin Towers was a "sneak attack"? – Is this not of the same relevance as the conceit that John Brown's attack on Harpers Ferry was a "sneak attack"?)



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October 19, Wednesday: Wilhelm Tempel discovered a diffuse nebula around the Pleid star Merope.

[John Brown](#) was being taken from [Harpers Ferry](#) to the nearby Charles Town jail. (Brown's white jailer there, John Avis, it seems, had been a childhood friend of Dr. [Martin Robison Delany](#).) Full reports of the event at Harpers Ferry were appearing in this day's newspapers.

[Henry Thoreau](#) and [Bronson Alcott](#) were visiting [Waldo Emerson](#) when the news was brought in, of Captain [John Brown](#)'s raid at [Harpers Ferry](#). Thoreau immediately began working over his materials about Brown.



"If [Christ](#) should appear on earth he would on all hands be denounced as a mistaken, misguided man, insane and crazed."



-Thoreau, October 19, 1859

JOURNAL :

**Here comes Jesus again**

**mistaken, misguided**

**insane and crazed**

When [Julia Ward Howe](#) read in the Boston [Transcript](#) about the raid upon the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, her husband [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#) would casually remarked to her "Brown has got to work." The newspapers were beginning to carry an account of an intriguing set of papers that had been discovered where Brown had unaccountably left them behind, when he had gone off on the morning of the 16th to launch his raid on the Harpers Ferry arsenal. Among the papers, in addition to an envelope from Dr. Howe incriminatingly addressed to Brown, were a note from [Gerrit Smith](#) and two letters from [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#).

The Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) began to plan a rescue of Brown from the jail cell in Charles Town. He actually would succeed in raising aid for the Brown family. He would opinion, much later in life, after having had a chance to compare and contrast his ineffectiveness as a member of the [Secret "Six"](#) with the effectiveness of the revolutionary terror organized by the Communist Party in Russia, that:

The Russian revolutionists, who were so efficient in making the tyrant Tsar Alexander II explode, have much to teach us about practical terror.

[Thoreau](#) was being written to by Theophilus Brown in Worcester.

*Worcester Oct 19  
Friend Thoreau— The book  
came duly to hand, and  
as it was not for me,*



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*I intend to send <sup>^</sup>you the money  
for it in this note—  
Blake must speak for him  
-self and not for me when  
speaking of that mountain  
walk of ours. I enjoyed it  
well enough, and aught to  
be ashamed of myself that  
I did, perhaps, since it  
yielded me so little.  
Our Cape Cod walk salts  
down better with me, & yet  
there was 'nt much salt  
in that,—enough to save*



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

*it perhaps, but not <sup>^</sup>enough of the  
sea & sand & sky. The good  
things I got in it were rather  
incidental—[&]did not belong  
to the sea. But I did get*

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*some glimpses of the sea.  
I remember a smoke we  
had on a little <sup>^</sup>barren knoll where  
we heard the plover, in North  
Dennis, in the twilight after  
a long & hot days walk.  
We heard the pounding of the  
surf against a shore  
twenty miles off[,—(]so said  
the man at whose house  
we passed the night,—)—and  
we were expecting to arrive  
there the next day.  
I have been in the habit of  
thinking our journey culmin  
-ated in that smoke, if it  
did 'nt end there, for, though  
we arrived at the beach the  
next day according to programme  
& found the thirty miles stretch  
of it, with its accompaniments  
too large to complain of,  
yet—our anticipations  
were immense. But now*

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*in thinking of it the actual  
sea & sky loom up larger,  
while our smoke & dreams  
—hold their own pretty  
well—  
Your friend  
Theo<sup>s</sup> Brown*




## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR


October 19, Wednesday-October 28, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) prepared to celebrate [John Brown](#)'s famous dance on air, by writing "A Plea for Captain John Brown."

The speaking notes Thoreau used during his impassioned plea for Captain Brown,  he drafted in haste in his dire days and nights after October 18, from which to save precious time he would allow the publishers to set type directly. A transcript follows,



 A Plea  
for  
Henry D. Thoreau.  
by  
Austin Meredith.

*I trust that you will pardon me for being here. I do not wish to force my thoughts upon you, but I feel forced myself. Little as I know of Henry Thoreau, I would fain do my part to correct the tone and the statements of the newspapers, and of my countrymen generally, respecting his character and actions. It costs us nothing to be just. We can at least express our sympathy with, and admiration for, him and his companions, and that is what I now propose to do.*

but immediately you will note that, for my own reasons which you will perhaps appreciate or not appreciate, I have made name substitutions. Quakers will note that Thoreau, in this famous speech in Concord on the evening of October 30th, then in Boston on November 1st, then in Worcester on November 3d,  uses a characteristic [Quaker](#) idiom: rather than suggesting that his audience should submit to his discourse for their edification, he asks them to be with him while he follows a **leading**, that compels him, a **need** he has, to speak out.

Elza Maxson had come east from [Springdale, Iowa](#) when summoned by [John Brown](#). Due to some uncertainty of dates, however, he had still been on his way when news that the attack had already occurred reached him.



October 19, Wednesday: When a government puts forth its strength on the side of injustice, as ours (especially to-day) to maintain slavery and kill the liberators of the slave, what a merely brute, or worse than brute, force it is seen to be! A demoniacal force! It is more manifest than ever that tyranny rules. I see this government to be effectually allied with France and Austria in oppressing mankind. One comment I heard of by the postmaster of this village on the news of Brown's death: [IT HAD BEEN REPORTED THAT BROWN WAS KILLED AT THE TIME OF HIS CAPTURE.] "He died as the fool dieth." I should have answered this man, "He did not live as the fool liveth, and he died as he lived." Treason! where does treason take its rise? I cannot help thinking of you as you deserve, ye governments. Can you dry up the fountains of thought? High treason which is resistance to tyranny here below has its origin in, and is first committed by, the power that makes and forever re-creates man. When you have caught and hung all of these human rebels, you have accomplished nothing but your own guilt, for you have not struck at the



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

fountainhead. You presume to contend with a foe against whom West Point cadets and rifled cannon point not. Can all the arts of the cannon-founder tempt matter to turn against its Maker? Is the form in which he casts it more essential than the constitution of it and of himself?

I see that the same journal that contains this pregnant news from Harper's Ferry is chiefly filled, in parallel columns, with the reports of the political conventions that are now being held. But the descent is too steep to them; they should have been spared this contrast. To turn from the voices and deeds of earnest men to the cackling of political conventions! Office-seekers and speechmakers, who do not so much as lay an egg, but wear their breasts bare upon an egg of chalk. Their great game is the game of straws, or rather that universal and aboriginal game of the platter, at which the Indians cried, Hub-bub. Some of them generals forsooth.

It galls me to listen to the remarks of craven-hearted neighbors who speak disparagingly of Brown because he resorted to violence, resisted the government, threw his life away! –what way have they thrown their lives, pray? –neighbors who would praise a man for attacking singly an ordinary band of thieves or murderers. Such minds are not equal to the occasion. They preserve the so-called peace of their community by deeds of petty violence every day. Look at the policeman's billy and handcuffs! Look at the jail! Look at the gallows! Look at the chaplain of the regiment! We are hoping only to live safely on the outskirts of this provisional army. So they defend themselves and our hen-roosts, and maintain slavery.

There sits a tyrant holding fettered four millions of slaves. Here comes their heroic liberator; if he falls, will he not still live?

C. says that he saw a loon at Walden the 15th.

P. M. – To Lee's Cliff.

The tupelo berries have all fallen; how long? Alternate cornel about bare. Hardhack half bare. Many witch-hazel nuts are not yet open. The bushes just bare. The slippery elm is nearly bare, like the common near it. Cedar berries, how long? 14th at least; probably by the time they lost their leaves. There is one sizable tree west by north of Lee's Cliff, near the wall. *Lycopodium dendroideum* (not variety) is just shedding pollen near this cedar. I see asparagus in the woods there near the cedar, four or five feet high!

Find the seedling *archangelica* grown about two feet high and still quite green and growing, though the full-grown plants are long since dead, root and stalk. This suggests that no doubt much of the radical spring greenness is of this character, – seedlings of biennials, and perhaps more of them a persistent or late growth from a perennial root, as crowfoot, whiteweed, five-finger, etc. The scent of the *archangelica* root is not agreeable to me. The scent of my fingers after having handled it reminds me strongly of the musquash and woodchuck, though the root itself does not; so its odor must be allied to theirs.

I find at Lee's Cliff, on the shelves and sides of the rocks, a new fern, apparently *Cystopteris fragilis*, more than half decayed or withered, though some fresher and shorter fronds at the base of the others are still quite green. It curls up so in my hat that I have difficulty in examining it. It is abundant thereabouts.

Paddling up the river the other day, those (probably canoe) birches on Mt. Misery on the edge of the hill a mile in, front looked like little dark clouds, for [I] could not distinguish their white trunks against the sky.

Though the dark-blue, or ripe, creeping juniper berries are chiefly on the lower part of the branches, I see fresh green ones on old wood as big as a pipe-stem and often directly opposite to purple ones (!). They are strangely mixed up. I am not sure but some of this year's berries are already ripe. See a black and rusty hedgehog (?) caterpillar in the path.

The remarks of my neighbors upon Brown's death and supposed fate, with very few exceptions, are, "He is undoubtedly insane," "Died as the fool dieth," "Served him right;" and so they proceed to live their sane, and wise, and altogether admirable lives, reading their Plutarch a little, but chiefly pausing at that feat of Putnam, who was let down into a wolf's den (that is quite the strongest pap that Young America is fed on); and so they nourish themselves for brave and patriotic deeds.

What is the character of that calm which follows when the law and the slaveholder prevail?

A government that pretends to be Christian and crucifies a million Christs every day!

Our foes are in our midst and all about us. Hardly a house but is divided against itself. For our foe is the all but universal woodenness (both of head and heart), the want of vitality, of man, –the effect of vice, –whence are begotten fear and superstition and bigotry and persecution and slavery of all kinds. Mere figure-heads upon a hulk, with livers in the place of hearts. A church that can never have done with excommunicating Christ while it exists. Our plains were overrun the other day with a flock of adjutant-generals, as if a brood of cockerels had been let loose there, waiting to use their spurs in what sort of glorious cause, I ask. What more probable in the future, what more certain heretofore, than in grinding in the dust four hundred thousands of feeble and timid men, women, and children? The United States exclaims: "Here are four millions of human creatures which we have stolen. We have abolished among them the relations of father, mother, children, wife, and we mean to keep them in this condition. Will you, O Massachusetts, help us to do so?" And Massachusetts promptly answers,



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

“Aye!”

The cause is the worship of idols, which at length changes the worshipper into a stone image himself. Every man worships his ideal of power and goodness, or God, and the New-Englander is just as much an idolater as the Hindoo.

The momentary charge at Balaclava, in obedience to a blundering command, –proving what a perfect machine the soldier is– has been celebrated by a poet laureate; but the steady and for the most part successful charge against the legions of Slavery kept up for some years in Kansas by John Brown in obedience to an infinitely higher command is unsung, –as much more memorable than that as an intelligent and conscientious man is superior to a machine.

The brutish, thick-skinned herd, who do not know a man by sympathy, make haste home from their ballot-boxes and churches to their Castles of Indolence, perchance to cherish their valor there with some nursery talk of knights and dragons. A whole nation will for ages cling to the memory of its Arthur, or other imaginary hero, who perhaps never assailed its peculiar institution or sin, and, being imaginary, never failed, when they are themselves the very freebooters and craven knights whom he routed, while they forget their real heroes.

The publishers and the various boards of wooden-heads can afford to reprint that story of Putnam’s. You might open the district schools with the reading of it, because there is nothing about slavery or the church in it; unless it occurs to the reader that the pastors are wolves in sheep’s clothing.

I have seen no hearty approbation for this man in any Abolition journal; as if it were not consistent with their policy to express it, or maybe they did not feel it. And as for the herd of newspapers, I do not chance to know one in the country that will deliberately print anything that will ultimately and permanently reduce the number of its subscribers. They do not believe it would be expedient. If we do not say pleasant things, they argue, nobody will attend to us. And so they are like some auctioneers, who sing an obscene song in order to draw a crowd around them.

Another neighbor asks, Yankee-like, “What will he gain by it?” as if he expected to fill his pockets by this enterprise. They have no idea of gain but in this worldly sense. If it does not lead to a surprise party, if he does not get a new pair of boots and a vote of thanks, it must be a failure. Such do not know that like the seed is the fruit, and that, in the moral world, when good seed is planted, good fruit is inevitable and does not depend on our watering and cultivating; that when you plant, or bury, a hero in this field, a crop of heroes is sure to spring up. This is a seed of such force and vitality that it does not ask our leave to germinate.

Some eighteen hundred years ago Christ was crucified; this morning, perhaps, John Brown was hung. These are the two ends of a chain which I rejoice to know is not without its links.

The Republican editors, obliged to get their sentences ready for the morning edition, –and their dinner ready before afternoon, –speak of these men, not in a tone of admiration for their disinterestedness and heroism, not of sorrow even for their fate, but calling them “deluded fanatics,” “mistaken men,” “insane,” or “crazed.” Did it ever occur to you what a sane set of editors we are blessed with? –not “mistaken men;” who know very well on which side their bread is buttered!

The noble Republican Party is in haste to exculpate itself from all sympathy with these “misguided men.” Even the very men who would rejoice if he had succeeded, though in spite of all odds, are estranged from and deny him because he failed. A “dangerous man”! All the worthies and martyrs were such dangerous men. We wish that these editors and ministers were a little more dangerous.

It is mentioned against him and as an evidence of his insanity, “a conscientious man, very modest in his demeanor, that he was apparently inoffensive, until the subject of slavery was introduced, when he would exhibit a feeling of indignation unparalleled.” (Boston Journal, October 21, 1859. [Boston Daily Journal, reprinting from the New-York Herald])

If Christ should appear on earth he would on all hands be denounced as a mistaken, misguided man, insane and crazed.

The Liberator calls it “a misguided, wild, and apparently insane ... effort.”

“The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,” which have just met in Philadelphia, did not dare as a body to protest even against the foreign slave-trade, which even many domestic slave-traders are ready to do. And I hear of Northern men, women, and children by families buying a life-membership in this society. A life-membership in the grave! You can get buried cheaper than that.

He was a superior man. He did not value his bodily life in comparison with ideal things; he did not recognize unjust human laws, but resisted them, as he was bid; and now he is called insane by all who cannot appreciate such magnanimity. He needed no babbling lawyer, making false issues, to defend him. He was more than a match for all judges that American voters, or office-holders of whatever grade, can create. He could not have been tried by a jury of his peers, because his peers did not exist.

When a man stands up serenely against the condemnation and vengeance of mankind, rising above them



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literally by a whole body, –though he were a slave, though he were a freeman, though he were of late the vilest murderer, who has settled that matter with himself, –the spectacle is a sublime one! –didn't ye know it, ye Garrisons, ye Buchanans, ye politicians, attorney-generals? –and we become criminal in comparison. Do yourselves the honor to recognize him. He needs none of your respect. What though he did not belong to your clique!

I do not believe in erecting statues to those who still live in our minds and hearts, whose bones have not yet crumbled in the earth around us, but I would rather see the statue of John Brown in the Massachusetts State-House yard than that of any other man whom I know.

What a contrast, when we turn to that political party which is so anxiously shaking its skirts clean of him and his friends and looking round for some available slaveholder to be its candidate!

The evil is not merely a stagnation of blood, but a stagnation of spirit. Of course, the mass of men, even the well-disposed but sluggish souls who are ready to abet when their conscience or sympathies are reached, cannot conceive of a man who is actuated by higher motives than they are. Accordingly they pronounce him insane, for they know that they would never act as he does as long as they are themselves.

This most hypocritical and diabolical government looks up from its seat upon four millions of gasping slaves and inquires with an assumption of innocence, "What do you assault me for? Am I not an honest man?" "Ah, sir, but your seat –your footstool –my father and mother –get off! –get off!" But there sits the incubus with all his weight, and stretching ever more and more, and for all reply answers, "Why won't you cease agitation upon this subject?"

The only government that I recognize is that power that establishes justice in the land, never that which establishes injustice. Suppose that there is a private company in Massachusetts that out of its own purse and magnanimity saves all the fugitive slaves that run to us, and protects our colored fellow-citizens, and leaves the other work to the government, so called. Is not that government fast losing its occupation and becoming contemptible to mankind? If private men are obliged to perform the offices of government, to protect the weak and dispense justice, then the government becomes only a hired man, or clerk, to perform menial or indifferent services. Of course, that is but the shadow of a government, whose existence necessitates a Vigilance Committee. But such is the character of our Northern States generally; each has its Vigilance Committee. And, to a certain extent, these crazy governments recognize and accept this relation. They say, virtually, "We'll be glad to work for you on these terms, only don't make a noise about it." Such a government is losing its power and respectability as surely as water runs out of a leaky vessel and is held by one that can contain it.



"If Christ should appear on earth he would on all hands be denounced as a mistaken, misguided man, insane and crazed."



–Thoreau, October 19, 1859

JOURNAL :

**Here comes Jesus again**

**mistaken, misguided**


**insane and crazed**



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## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

October 21, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) continued writing in his journal about Captain [John Brown](#). In February  Thoreau had overheard some local chit-chat about the milk business, and at this point as an explanatory trope he would have reason to compare and contrast the selling of cow's milk by the quart to the selling of human blood by the quart.



Evidently there had been some remarks in the local newspapers about the speech that [John Beeson](#) had delivered earlier that month at Faneuil Hall about the racial horrors that were taking place on the West Coast, for Thoreau remarked upon the reported fact that “In California and Oregon, if not nearer home, it is common to treat men exactly like deer which are hunted, and I read from time to time in Christian newspapers how many ‘bucks,’ that is, Indian men, their sportsmen have killed.”



October 21. P.M.—To Mason’s pasture.

The brook between John Flint’s house and the river is half frozen over.

The clump of mountain laurel in Mason’s pasture is of a triangular form, about six rods long by a base of two and a third rods, —or seven or eight square rods, —beside some separate clumps.

It is very cold and blustering to-day. It is the breath of winter, which is encamped not far off to the north.

A great many shrub oak acorns hold on, and are a darker brown than ever.

Insane! A father and seven sons, and several more men besides, —as many, at least, as twelve disciples, —all struck with insanity at once; while the sane tyrant holds with a firmer gripe than ever his four millions of slaves, and a thousand sane editors. his abettors, are saving their country and their bacon! Just as insane as were their efforts in Kansas. Ask the tyrant who is his most dangerous foe, the sane man or the insane.

If some Captain Ingraham threatens to fire into an Austrian vessel, we clap our hands all along the shore. It won’t hit us; it won’t disturb our tyranny. But let a far braver than he attack the Austria within us, we turn, we actually fire those same guns upon him, and cry “Insane.”

The government, its salary being insured, withdraws into the back shop, taking the Constitution with it, as farmers in the winter contrive to turn a penny by following the coopering business. When the reporter to the Herald (!) reports the conversation “verbatim,” he does not know of what undying words he is made the vehicle. Read his admirable answers to Mason and others. How they are dwarfed and defeated by the contrast! On the one side half-brutish, half-timid questioning; on the other, truth, clear as lightning, crashing into their obscene temples. They are made to stand with Pilate, and Gessler, and the Inquisition. How ineffectual their speech and action! and what a void their silence!

I speak to the stupid and timid chattels of the north, pretending to read history and their Bibles, desecrating every house and every day they breathe in! True, like the clods of the valley, they are incapable of perceiving the light, but I would fain arouse them by any stimulus to an intelligent life.



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

Throughout the land they, not of equal magnanimity, talk of vengeance and insanity.

Away with your broad and flat churches, and your narrow and tall churches! Take a step forward and invent a new style of outhouses. Invent a salt that will save you and defend our nostrils.

The slave-ship is on her way, crowded with its dying hundreds; a small crew of slaveholders is smothering four millions under the hatches; and yet the politician asserts that the only proper way by which deliverance is to be obtained is by “the quiet diffusion of sentiments of humanity,” without any “outbreak”! And in the same breath they tell us that all is quiet now at Harper’s Ferry. What is that that I hear cast overboard? The bodies of the dead, who have found deliverance. That is the way we are diffusing humanity, and all its sentiments with it.

Prominent and influential editors, accustomed to deal with politicians, men of an infinitely lower grade, say, in their ignorance, that he acted “on the principle of revenge.” They do not know the man. They must enlarge themselves to conceive of him. I have no doubt that, if that is of any importance, the time will come when they will begin to see him as he was. They have got to conceive of a man of ideas and of principle, hard as it may be for them, and not a politician or an Indian; of a man who did not wait till he was personally interfered with or thwarted in some harmless business before he gave his life to the cause of the oppressed.

I know that there have been a few heroes in the land, but no man has ever stood up in America for the dignity of human nature so devotedly, persistently, and so effectively as this man. Ye need not trouble yourselves, Republican or any other party, to wash your skirts of him. No intelligent person will ever be convinced that he was any creature of yours. He went and came, as he informs us, “under the auspices of John Brown, and nobody else.”

Ethan Allen and Stark, though worthy soldiers in their day, were rangers in a far lower field and in a less important cause.

Insane! Do the thousands who knew him best, who have rejoiced at his deeds in Kansas and have afforded him material aid, think him insane?

It costs us nothing to be just. It enriches us infinitely to recognize greater qualities than we possess in another. We can at least express our sympathy with, and admiration for, John Brown and his companions, and this is what I now propose to do.

What has Massachusetts and the North sent a few sane senators to Congress for of late years? –to declare with effect what kind of sentiments? All their speeches put together and boiled down—and probably they themselves will allow it—do not match for simple and manly directness, force, and effectiveness the few casual remarks of insane John Brown on the floor of the Harper’s Ferry engine-house. To be sure, he was not our representative. He is too fair a specimen of a man to represent the like of us. In his case there is no idle eloquence, no made speech. Truth is his inspirer, and earnestness his critic and polisher of his sentences. He could afford to lose his Sharp’s rifles, while he retained his faculty of speech, –a Sharp’s rifle of infinitely surer and longer range.

“But he won’t gain anything.” Well, no! I don’t suppose he could get four-and-sixpence a day for being hung, take the year round. But then he stands a chance to save a considerable part of his soul, –and such a soul! –when you do not. No doubt you can get more in your market for a quart of milk than for a quart of blood, but that is not the market that heroes carry their blood to.

So ye write in your easy-chairs, and thus he, wounded, responds from the door of the Harper’s Ferry engine-house: “No man sent me here; it was my own prompting and that of my Maker. I acknowledge no master in human form.”

And in what a sweet, kindly strain he proceeds, addressing those who held him prisoner: “I think, my friends, you are guilty of a great wrong against God and humanity, and it would be perfectly right for any one to interfere with you so far as to free those you willfully and wickedly hold in bondage.”

And, referring to his movement: “It is, in my opinion, the greatest service a man can render to God!”

“I pity the poor in bondage that have none to help them; that is why I am here; not to gratify any personal animosity, revenge, or vindictive spirit. It is my sympathy with the oppressed and the wronged, that are as good as you, and as precious in the sight of God.”

“I want you to understand that I respect the rights of the poorest and weakest of colored people, oppressed by the slave system, just as much as I do those of the most wealthy and powerful.”

Thus the insane man preaches, while the representatives of so-called Christians (I refer to the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions), who pretend to be interested in the heathen, dare not so much as protest against the foreign slave-trade!

“I wish to say, furthermore, that you had better, all you people at the South, prepare yourselves for a settlement of that question, that must come up for settlement sooner than you are prepared for it. The sooner you are prepared the better. You may dispose of me very easily. I am nearly disposed of now; but this question is still to be settled, –this negro question, I mean; the end of that is not yet.”

You will perceive that not a single forcible or noticeable word is uttered by his questioners; they stand there the



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

JOHN BUNYAN

helpless tools in this great work. It was no human power that gathered them about this preacher.

What should we think of the Oriental Cadi behind whom worked in secret a Vigilance Committee? What shall we think of a government to which all the truly brave and just men in the land are enemies, standing between it and those whom it oppresses? Do not we Protestants know the likeness of Luther, Fox, Bunyan, when we see it? Shall we still be put to bed with our story-books, not knowing day from night?

We talk about a representative government, but what a monster of a government is that where the noblest faculties of the mind and the whole heart are not represented. A semihuman tiger or ox stalking over the earth, with its heart taken out and the top of its brain shot away.

In California and Oregon, if not nearer home, it is common to treat men exactly like deer which are hunted, and I read from time to time in Christian newspapers how many “bucks,” that is, Indian men, their sportsmen have killed.

Who is here so base, that would be a bondman? Who is here so vile, that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

We dream of foreign countries, of other times and races of men, placing them at a distance in history or in space; but let some significant event like the present occur in our midst, and we discover, often, this distance and this strangeness between us and our nearest neighbors. They are our Austrias, and Chinas, and South Sea Islands. Our crowded society becomes well spaced all at once, clean and handsome to the eye, –a city of magnificent distances. We discover why it was that we never got beyond compliments and surfaces with them before; we become aware of as many versts between us and them as there are between a wandering Tartar or Pawnee and a Chinese or American town. The thoughtful man becomes a hermit in the thoroughfares of the market-place. Impassable seas suddenly find their level between us, or dumb steppes stretch themselves out there.

I do not complain of any tactics that are effective of good, whether one wields the quill or the sword, but I shall not think him mistaken who quickest succeeds to liberate the slave. I will judge of the tactics by the fruits.

It is the difference of constitution, of intelligence, and faith, and not streams and mountains, that makes the true and impassable boundaries between individuals and states. None but the like-minded can come plenipotentiary to our court.

They who are continually shocked by slavery have some right to be shocked by the violent death of the slaveholder, but no others. Such will be more shocked by his life than by his death.



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**NOT CIVIL WAR**

October 22, Saturday: Ludwig (Louis) Spohr died after a short illness, in Kassel, at the age of 75.

After Moroccans attacked unfinished fortifications at Ceuta in August, Spain declared war on Morocco.

The breakaway city of Buenos Aires was defeated by Argentinian troops and forced to rejoin the nation.

The Lunatic Asylum West of the Alleghany Mountains opened for patients in Weston, Virginia. This facility would wind up in West Virginia due to the Civil War and be renamed the West Virginia Hospital for the Insane. It would later be known as Weston State Hospital and then as Weston Hospital.<sup>73</sup>

**PSYCHOLOGY**

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73. Street, W.R. A CHRONOLOGY OF NOTEWORTHY EVENTS IN AMERICAN **PSYCHOLOGY**. Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1994



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

The Reverend [Samuel Joseph May](#) sailed from England for the United States.



[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) wrote from his Canadian hideout to his co-conspirator of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy, the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), in exile in Rome: "Our old friend struck his blow in such a way, —either by his own folly or the direction of Providence,— that it has recoiled, and ruined him, and perhaps those who were his friends.... The poor old man fought like a hero, and will die like one, —by the rope, it is most likely. Two of his sons were shot by his side, and three-fourths of his men. There has been nothing so much in the 'high Roman fashion' seen in this country for many a year. Now he lies in a Virginia jail, tormented with questions, wounded, and waiting his trial for murder and treason.... What course the government will pursue remains to be seen; but most likely they will follow up the matter as closely as possible; and we shall have plenty of treason-trials, and bloody threats, and some bloodshed. All this will weaken the Slave Power; and the good of the tragedy will outweigh the evil, no doubt."



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[Henry Thoreau](#) developed his thoughts on Captain [John Brown](#), positing a future in which just as the American society was doing away with [dueling](#) or fighting one another with pistols, in course of time it might be possible also to do away with fighting one another with lawyers — “Such improvements are not altogether unheard of.”



October 22: P.M.—To Cliffs and Fair Haven.

I am surprised to find in the field behind the top of the Cliffs a little vetch still perfectly fresh and blooming, where Wheeler had grain a year or two since, with numerous little plump pods four or five eighths of an inch long and commonly four roundish seeds to each. It must be, I think, Gray’s *Vicia tetrasperma*, though he makes that have white flowers (apparently same as Bigelow’s *V. pusilla*, also made to have white flowers, but Dewey calls them “bluish white”), while these are purple. Otherwise it corresponds.

A marsh hawk sails over Fair Haven Hill. In the wood-path below the Cliffs I see perfectly fresh and fair *Viola pedata* flowers, as in the spring, though but few together. No flower by its second blooming more perfectly brings back the spring to us.

In my blustering walk over the Mason and Hunt pastures yesterday, I saw much of the withered indigo-weed which was broken off and blowing about, and the seeds in its numerous black pods rattling like the rattlepod though not nearly so loud.

The very surface of the earth itself has been rapidly imbrowned of late, like the acorns in their cups, in consequence of cold and frost; and the evergreens and few deciduous plants which are slow to wither, like Jersey tea, are more and more distinct.

*F. hyemalis* quite common for a week past.

One would say that the modern Christian was a man who had consented to say all the prayers in their liturgy, provided you would let him go straight to bed and sleep quietly afterward. All his prayers begin with “Now I lay me down to sleep.” He has consented to perform certain old-established charities, too, after a fashion, but he doesn’t wish to hear of any new-fangled ones; he doesn’t want to have any codicils added to the contract, to fit it to the present time,—unexpected demands made on him, after he has said his prayers. He shows the whites of his eyes on the Sabbath and the blacks all the rest of the week.

It was evidently far from being a wild and desperate and insane attempt. It was a well-matured plan.

The very fact that he had no rabble or troop of hirelings about him would alone distinguish him from ordinary heroes. His company was small indeed, because few could be found worthy to pass muster. He would have no rowdy or swaggerer, no profane swearer, for, as he said, he always found these men to fail at last. He would have only men of principle, and they are few. When it was observed that if he had had a chaplain his would have been a perfect Cromwellian company, he said that he would have had a chaplain if he could [HAVE] found one who could perform that service suitably.

Each one who there laid down his life for the poor and oppressed was thus a picked man, culled out of many thousands, if not millions; a man of principle, of rare courage, and of devoted humanity; ready to lay down their lives any moment for the weak and enslaved. It may be doubted if there were any more their equals in all the land, for their leader scoured the land far and wide, seeking to swell his troop. These alone stood forward, prepared to step between the oppressor and the oppressed. Surely they were the very best men you could select to be hung. That was the greatest compliment this country could pay them. They were ripe for the gallows.

I regard this event as a touchstone designed to bring out with glaring distinctness the character of this government.

A man of Spartan habits, who at sixty has scruples about his diet at your table, must eat sparingly and fare hard, as becomes a soldier, he says, and one who is ever fitting himself for difficult enterprises.

A man of rare common sense and directness of speech, as of action; a Transcendentalist above all, a man of ideals and principles,—that was what distinguished him. Of unwavering purposes, not to be dissuaded but by an experience and wisdom greater than his own. Not yielding to a whim or transient impulse, but carrying out the purpose of a life.

He did not go to the college called Harvard; he was not fed on the pap that is there furnished. As he phrased it, “I know no more of grammar than one of your calves.” But he went to the great university of the West, where he sedulously pursued the study of Liberty, for which he had early betrayed a fondness, and, having taken many degrees, he finally commenced the practice of Humanity, as you all know.

I see now that it was necessary that the bravest and humanest man in all the country should be hung. Perhaps he saw it himself. If any leniency were shown him, any compromise made with him, any treating with him at all, by the government, he might be suspected.



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

We needed to be thus assisted to see our government by the light of history. It needed to see itself. Compare the platform of any or all of the political parties, which deem themselves sane, with the platform on which he lay and uttered these things!!

I foresee the time when the painter will paint that scene, the poet will sing it, the historian record it, and, with the Landing of the Pilgrims and the [Declaration of Independence](#), it will be the ornament of some future national gallery, when the present form of slavery shall be no more. We shall then be at liberty to weep for John Brown. Then and not till then we will take our revenge.

I rejoice that I live in this age, that I was his contemporary.

When I consider the spectacle of himself, and his six sons, and his son-in-law, enlisted for this fight, proceeding coolly, reverently, humanely to work, while almost all America stood ranked on the other side, I say again that it affects me as a sublime spectacle. For months if not years, sleeping and waking upon it, summering and wintering the thought, without expecting any reward but a good conscience and the gratitude of those made free. If he had had any journal advocating "his cause," it would have been fatal to his efficiency,—any "organ," as the phrase is, monotonously and wearisomely playing that same old tune, and then passing round the hat. If he had acted in any way so as to gain the respect or toleration of the government, he might have been suspected. It was the fact that the tyrant must give place to him, or he to the tyrant, that distinguished him from all other reformers that I know.

For once the Sharp's rifle and the revolver were employed in a righteous cause. The tools were in the hands of one who could use them. I know that the mass of my neighbors think that the only righteous use that can be made of them is to fight duels with them when we are insulted by other nations, or hunt Indians, or shoot fugitive slaves with them.

Talk of political parties and their platforms! he could not have any platform but that of the Harper's Ferry engine-house.

I am aware that I anticipate a little,—that he was still, at the last accounts, alive in the hands of his foes; but that being the case, I find myself most naturally thinking and speaking of him as physically dead.

The same indignation that cleared the temple once will clear it again. The question is not about the weapon, but the spirit in which you use it. No man has appeared in America as yet who loved his fellowman so well and treated him so tenderly. He lived for him; he took up his life and he laid it down for him.

Though you may not approve of his methods or his principles, cease to call names, to cry mad dog. The method is nothing; the spirit is all in all. It is the deed, the devotion, the soul of the man. For you this is at present a question of magnanimity. If the schoolboy, forgetting himself, rushed to the rescue of his drowning playmate, what though he knock down somebody on his way, what though he does not go to the same church with you, or his father belong to the same political party! Would you not like to claim kindred with him in this, though in no other thing he is like, or likely, to you?

Heroes have fought well on their stumps when their legs were shot off, but I never heard of any good done by a government that had no heart, or at least had not brains of a high order.

This is not the time to hear what Tom, Dick, or Harry is doing, or in such a case would have done. We shall have time enough to find that out in, if we do not know it already. We ask you to the extent of your ability to appreciate this man and his deed, in spite of the difference between you and him. Who cares whether he belonged to your clique, or party, or sect, or not?

A man does a brave and humane deed, and at once, on all sides, we hear people and parties declaring: "I didn't do it, nor countenance him to do it, in any conceivable way. It can't fairly be inferred from my past career." Now, I am not interested to hear you define your position. I don't know that I ever was, or ever shall be. I am not now, at any rate. I think [IT] is mere egotism, and impertinent.

On the whole my respect for my fellow-men, except as one may outweigh a million, is not being increased these days. I have noticed the cold-blooded way in which newspaper-writers and men generally speak of this event, as if an ordinary malefactor, though one of unusual pluck,—as the Governor of Virginia says, using the language of the cockpit, "the gamest man he ever saw,"—had been caught and were about to be hung. He was not dreaming of his foes when the Governor thought he looked so brave.

Think of him,—of his rare qualities!—such a man as it takes ages to make, and ages to understand; no mock hero, not the representative of any party. A man such as the sun may never rise upon again in this benighted land, to whose making went the costliest material, the finest adamant, the purest gold; sent to be the redeemer of those in captivity;—and the only use to which you can put him, after mature deliberation, is to hang him at the end of a rope. I need not describe him. He has stood where I now stand; you have all seen him. You who pretend to care for Christ crucified, consider what you are about to do to him who offered himself to be the savior of four millions of men!

I wish to correct the tone and some of the statements of the newspapers respecting the life and character and last



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

action of John Brown. The newspapers seem to ignore, or perhaps they are really ignorant of, the fact that there are at least as many as one or two individuals to a town throughout the North who think much as I do about him and his enterprise. I do not hesitate to assert that they are an important and growing party.

I speak for the slave when I say that I prefer the philanthropy of John Brown to that philanthropy which neither shoots me nor liberates me.

Talk of failure and throwing his life away! he is not dead yet in any sense, and if he were dead he would still live. Were the battles of Black Jack and Ossawatimie and many encounters of less note useless and a failure? I think that it was he more than any other who made Kansas as free as she is, who taught the slaveholder that it was not safe for him to carry his slaves thither. None of the political parties have ever accomplished anything of the sort. It was he who taught Missouri that it was not profitable to hold slaves in that neighborhood. Was it a failure to deliver from bondage thirteen human beings and walk off with them by broad daylight, for weeks if not months, at a leisurely pace, through one State after another, for half the length of the North, conspicuous to all parties, with a price set upon his head, going into a court-room on his way and telling what he had done? To face singly in his work of righteousness the whole power of this unrighteous government, and successfully too! Who has gained the most ground within five years,—Brown or the Slave Power?

And this, not because the government was lenient, but because none of its menials dared to touch him. They counted the cost and concluded that a thousand dollars was not enough.

There are a few—there are more than you suppose—who cannot help thinking of that man now in the clutches of the enraged slaveholder.

He is one of that class of whom we hear a great deal, but, for the most part, see nothing at all,—the Puritans. It is in vain to kill him. He died lately in the time of Cromwell, but he reappeared here. Why should he not? Some of the Puritan stock are said to have come over and settled in New England. They were a class that did something else than celebrate their forefathers' day and eat parched corn in remembrance of their ancestors. They were neither Democrats nor Republicans. They were men of simple habits, straightforward, prayerful; not thinking much of rulers who did not fear God, not making many compromises, or seeking after available candidates.

He is of the same age with the century. He is what is called a thin and wiry-looking man, being composed of nerves instead of flesh, some five feet nine or ten inches high, with a sharp eye, and the last time he was hereabouts wore a long white beard; with a very soldier-like bearing.

I understand his grandfather was an officer in the Revolution; that he himself was born in Connecticut, but early went to Ohio with his father. His father was a contractor who furnished beef to the army there in the last war, and young Brown, accompanying his father to the camp and assisting him in his employment, saw considerable of military life,—more perhaps than he would if he had been a soldier, for he was sometimes present at the councils of the officers. He saw enough, at any rate, to disgust him with war and excite in him a great abhorrence of it; so much so that, though he was offered some petty office in the army, he not only refused it, but also refused to train when he was warned, and was fined for it. He was then about eighteen. He said that few persons had any conception of the cost, even the pecuniary cost, of firing a single bullet in war. Above all, he learned by experience how armies were collected, supplied, and maintained in the field for a length of time,—a work which required at least as much experience and skill as to lead them in battle. And he then resolved that he would never have anything to do with war, unless it were a war for liberty. I should say that he was an old-fashioned man in his respect for the Constitution and the [Declaration of Independence](#), and his faith in the permanence of this Union. Slavery he saw to be wholly opposed to all of these, and he was its determined foe.

When the troubles first broke out in Kansas, he sent several of his sons thither to strengthen the party of the Free State men, fitting them out with such weapons as he had, telling them if the troubles should increase, and there should be need of him, he should follow, to assist them with his hand and counsel. It was not long before he felt it to be his duty to give the Free State men of Kansas, who had no leader of experience, the benefit of what experience he had had.

At a time when scarcely a man from the Free States was able to reach Kansas by any direct route, at least without having his arms taken from him, he, carrying what imperfect firelocks and other weapons he could collect, openly drove an ox-cart through Missouri, with his surveyor's compass exposed in it, and, passing for a simple surveyor, who by his very profession must be neutral, he met with no resistance and in the course of his leisurely journey became thoroughly acquainted with the plans of the Border Ruffians. For some time after his arrival he pursued, before he was known, similar tactics. When, for instance, he saw a knot of the Ruffians on the prairie, discussing, of course, the single topic that then occupied their minds, he would take his compass and one of his sons, and perhaps proceed to run an imaginary line which passed through the very spot on which that conclave had assembled, and then of course he would have some talk with them, learn their news and their plans, and when he had heard all they had to impart, he would resume his surveying, and run on his line till he was out of sight. This is enough to show that his plans were not crazy laid.





## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

For a good part of his life he was a surveyor, part of the time, I think, in Illinois. At one time he was engaged in wool-growing, and went to Europe once as the agent of some wool-growers; and there too he carried his common sense with him. I have been told, for instance, that he made such a remark as this,—that he saw why the soil of England was so rich and that of Germany (or a part of it at least) so exhausted, and he thought of writing to some of the crowned heads about it. It was because in England the peasantry lived on the soil which they cultivated, while in Germany they were gathered into villages at night. It would be worth the while to have collected all the remarks of such a traveller.

Of course, he is not so foolish as to ask or expect any favors from the government, nor probably will his friends for him.

No wonder it struck the politicians and preachers generally very forcibly that either he was insane or they, and they, being the painters, or judges, this time, decided, naturally enough, that it must be he. Such, however, as far as I learn, has not been nor is likely to be the decision of those who have recently stood face to face to him and who are now about to hang him. They have not condescended to such insult. The slaveholders and the slaves who have really dealt with him are not likely sincerely to question his sanity, but rather political or religious parties, who stand further off from a living man.

I almost fear to hear of his deliverance, doubting if a prolonged life, if any life, can do as much good as his death. No doubt many of you have seen the little manuscript book which he carried about him, during the Kansas troubles,—his “orderly book,” as I think he called it,—containing the names of his small company, a score at most, and half of them his own family, and the rules which bound them together,—a contract which many of them have sealed with their blood. There was one rule, as I remember, which prohibited prophane swearing in his camp.

I believe that he never was able to find more than a score or so of recruits whom he would accept, and only ten or a dozen in whom he had perfect faith.

Perhaps anxious politicians may prove that only seventeen white men and five negroes were concerned in this enterprise, but the anxiety to prove this might suggest to themselves that all is not told. Why do they still dodge the truth? Do they not realize why they are so anxious? It is because of a dim consciousness of the fact, which they do not distinctly face, that at least five millions of the inhabitants of the United States who were not pining to attempt, would have rejoiced if it had succeeded. They at most only criticise the tactics.

He said that if any man offered himself to be a soldier under him who was forward to tell what he could or would do if he could only get sight of the enemy, he had but little confidence in him.

One writer says, I know not with what motive, that it is a fact “illustrative of Brown’s insanity, that he has charts of nearly all the great battle-fields of Europe.” I fear that his collection is not to be compared for completeness with that which this government possesses, however his sanity may be compared with its, though it did not make them itself, but there are two or three fields in Kansas of which he did not need to make any chart.

At any rate, I do not think it is sane to spend one’s whole life talking or writing about this matter, and I have not done so. A man may have other affairs to attend to.

The murderer always knows that he is justly punished; but when a government takes the life of a man without the consent of his conscience, it is an audacious government, and is taking a step toward its own dissolution. Is it not possible that an individual may be right and a government wrong? Are laws to be enforced simply because they were made, and declared by any number of men to be good, when they are not good? Is there any necessity for a man’s being a tool to perform a deed of which he disapproves? Is it the intention of lawmakers that good men shall be hung ever? Are judges to interpret the law according to the letter, and not the spirit? Who is it whose safety requires that Captain Brown be hung? Is it indispensable to any Northern man? If you do not wish it, say so distinctly. What right have you to enter into a compact with yourself (even) that you will do thus or so, against your better nature? Is it for you to make up your mind,—to form any resolution whatever,—and not accept the convictions that are forced upon you, and which even pass your understanding?

Any man knows when he is justified, and not all the wits in the world can enlighten him on that point.

I do not believe in lawyers,—in that mode of defending or attacking a man,—because you descend to meet the judge on his own ground, and, in cases of the highest importance, it is of no consequence whether a man breaks a human law or not. Let lawyers decide trivial cases. If they were interpreters of the everlasting laws which rightfully bind man, that would be another thing.

Just as we are doing away with duelling or fighting one another with pistols. I think that we may in course of time do away with fighting one another with lawyers. Such improvements are not altogether unheard of. A counterfeiting law-factory, standing half in a slave land and half in a free! What kind of laws for freemen can you expect from that? Substantial justice!! There’s nothing substantial about it, but the Judge’s salary and the lawyer’s fee.

The thought of that man’s position and probable fate is spoiling many a man’s day here at the North for other thinking. We do not think of buying any crape this time.

HANGING



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

It seems that one of his abettors had lived there for years, and Brown took all his measures deliberately. The country was mountainous, and it was given out that they were concerned in mining operations, and to play this part required very little invention on his part, such had been his previous pursuits and habits. Having been a surveyor, he would not make a strange figure in the fields and woods; this, too, would account [FOR] quantities of spades and pickaxes, and strangers from time to time visiting and conferring with him in a somewhat mysterious manner.

I have no respect for the judgment of any man who can read the report of that conversation and still call the principal insane. It has the ring of a saner sanity than an ordinary discipline and habits of life, than an ordinary organization, secures. Take any sentence of it,—“Any questions that I can honorably answer, I will; not otherwise. So far as I am myself concerned, I have told everything truthfully. I value my word, sir.”

He never overstated anything, but spoke within bounds. I remember particularly how, in his speech here, he referred to what his family had suffered in Kansas, never giving the least vent to his pent-up fire. It was a volcano with an ordinary chimney-flue. Also, referring to the deeds of certain Border Ruffians, he said, rapidly paring away his speech, like an experienced soldier keeping a reserve of force and meaning, “They had a perfect right to be hung.”

I would fain do my best to correct, etc., little as I know of him.

But I believe, without having any outward evidence, that many have already silently retracted their words.

They (Allen and Stark) may have possessed some of his love of liberty, indignation, and courage to face their country’s foes, but they had not the rare qualities—the peculiar courage and self-reliance—which could enable them to face their country itself, and all mankind, in behalf of the oppressed.

He could give you information on various subjects, for he had travelled widely and observed closely. He said that the Indians with whom he dealt in Kansas were perhaps the richest people in a pecuniary sense on the earth. The money that this government annually paid them gave so much to each member of the community. They were, moreover, more intelligent than the mass of the Border Ruffians, or that class of the inhabitants of Missouri.

Much of the time of late years he has had to skulk in the swamps of Kansas with a price set upon his head, suffering from sickness and poverty and exposure, befriended only by Indians and [A] few white men. When surprise was expressed that he was not taken, he accounted for it by saying that it was perfectly well understood that he would not be taken alive. He would even show himself openly in towns which were half composed of Border Ruffians, and transact some business, without delaying long, and yet nobody attempted to arrest [HIM], because, as he said, a small party did not like to undertake it, and a large one could not be got together in season. I thought the same of his speech which I heard some years ago,—that he was not in the least a rhetorician, was not talking to Buncombe or his constituents anywhere, who had no need to invent anything, but to tell the simple truth and communicate his resolution. Therefore he appeared incomparably strong, and eloquence in Congress or elsewhere was at a discount. It was like the speeches of Cromwell compared with those of an ordinary king. They have tried a long time; they have hung a good many, but never found the right one before.

Dispersing the sentiments of humanity! As if they were ever found unaccompanied by its deeds! as if you could disperse them as easily as water with a watering-pot and they were good only to lay the dust with!

A few ministers are doing their duty in New York. This use of the word “insane” has got to be a mere trope.

Newspaper-editors talk as if it were impossible that a man could be “divinely appointed” in these days to do any work whatever, as if vows and religion were out of date as connected with any man’s daily work, and as if a man’s death were a failure and his continued life, be it of whatever character, were a success. They argue that it is a proof of his insanity that he thought he was appointed to do this work which he did,—that he did not suspect himself for a moment!

If they do not mean this, then they do not speak the truth and say what they mean. They are simply at their old tricks still.

He said truly that the reason why such greatly superior numbers quailed before him with a handful of men only was, as some of his prisoners stated, that the former lacked a cause,—a kind of armor which he and his party never lacked. He said that when the time arrived, few men were found willing to lay down their lives in defense of what they knew to be wrong. They did not like that this should be their last act in this world.

As if the agent to abolish slavery could only be somebody “appointed” by the President or some political party. All this—his insanity (monomania, says one), etc.—made him to be “dreaded by the Missourians as a supernatural being.” Sure enough, a hero in the midst of us cowards is always so dreaded. He is just that thing. He shows himself superior to nature. He has a spark of divinity in him.

“Unless above himself he can  
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!”



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

I have read all the newspapers I could get within a week, and I do not remember in them a single expression of sympathy for these men.

Most of them decided not to print the full report of Brown's words in the armory "to the exclusion of other matter." Why, they have matterated, and there is no safety for them but in excluding the dead part and giving place to the living and healthy. But I object not so much to what they have not done as to what they have done. He was by descent and birth a New England farmer, a man of great common sense, deliberate and practical as that class, and tenfold more so. He was like the best of those who stood at our bridge once, on Lexington Common, and on Bunker Hill, only he was firmer and higher-principled than any that I chance to have heard of as there. It was no Abolition lecturer that converted him.

A Western paper says, to account for his escape from so many perils, that he was concealed under a "rural exterior," as if in that prairie land a hero should by good rights wear a citizen's dress only. It would appear from published letters that the women of the land are where the men should be. What sort of violence is that which is encouraged not by soldiers but by citizens, not so much by laymen as by ministers of the Gospel, not so much by the fighting sects as by Quakers, and not so much by Quaker men as Quaker women? The enemy may well "quake" at the thought of it. Is not that a righteous war where the best are thus opposed to the worst?

Governor Wise speaks far more justly and admiringly of him than any Northern editor that I have heard of. "They are themselves mistaken who take him to be a madman. . . . He is cool, collected, and indomitable, and it is but just to him to say that he was humane to his prisoners. . . . And he inspired me with great trust in his integrity as a man of truth. He is a fanatic, vain and garrulous (!), but firm, truthful, and intelligent. His men, too, who survive, are like him. . . . Colonel Washington says that he was the coolest and firmest man he ever saw in defying danger and death. With one son dead by his side, and another shot through, he felt the pulse of his dying son with one hand, and held his rifle with the other, and commanded his men with the utmost composure, encouraging them to be firm, and to sell their lives as dear as they could. Of the three white prisoners, Brown, Stevens, and Coppoc, it was hard to say which was the most firm." There is another man with whom the South and a good part of the North heartily sympathize. His name is Walker.

I subscribed a trifle when he was here three years ago, I had so much confidence in the man,—that he would do right,—but it would seem that he had not confidence enough in me, nor in anybody else that I know, to communicate his plans to us.

I do not wish to kill or to be killed, but I can foresee circumstances in which both of these things would be by me unavoidable. In extremities I could even be killed.

This event advertises me that there is such a fact as death,—the possibility of a man's dying. It seems as if no man had ever died in America; for in order to die you must first have lived. I don't believe in the hearses and palls and funerals that they have had. There was no death in the case, because there had been no life; they merely rotted or sloughed off, pretty much as they had rotted or sloughed along. No temple's veil was rent, only a hole dug somewhere. The best of them fairly ran down like a clock. I hear a good many pretend that they are going to die; or that they have died, for aught I know. Nonsense! I'll defy them to do it. They haven't got life enough in them. They deliquesce like fungi, and keep a hundred eulogists mopping the spot where they left off. Only half a dozen or so have died since the world began. Memento mori! they don't understand that sublime sentence which some worthy got sculptured on his gravestone once. They've understood it in a grovelling and snivelling sense. They've wholly forgotten how to die. Be sure you die. Finish your work. Know when to leave off. Men make a needless ado about taking lives,—capital punishment. Where is there any life to take? You don't know what it means to let the dead bury the dead.

Beauty stands veiled the while, and music is a screeching lie.

These men, in teaching us how to die, have at the same time taught us how to live. If this man's acts and words do not create a revival, it will be the severest possible satire on the acts and words of those who are said to have effected such things.

Do you ever think you have died, or are going to die, sir? No! there is no hope of you, sir. You haven't got your lesson yet. You've got to stay after school.

It is the best news that America has ever heard.

Franklin,—Washington,—they were let off without dying; these were merely missing one day.

It has already quickened the public pulse of the North; it has infused more, and more generous, blood into her veins and heart than any number of years of what is called commercial and political prosperity could. How many a man who was lately contemplating suicide has now something to live for!

Mr. Giddings says of them that "their sad fate will occupy a brief page in the history of our nation." Does he think that the history of the Republican Party—hitherto, for it may be re-created by his death—will be in the proportion of a sentence to that page?



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

When I reflect to what a cause this man devoted himself, and how religiously, and then reflect to what cause his judges and all who condemn him so angrily and fluently devote themselves, I see that they are as far apart as the heavens and earth are asunder. The amount of it is our “leading men” are a harmless kind of folk, and they know well enough that they were not divinely appointed, but elected by the votes of their party.

The most sensible of the apparently editorial articles on this event that I have met with is in the Wheeling Intelligence. Vide Supplement to Journal, October 29th.

October 23, Sunday: Amelia or Imelda Ann Painter was born to [Friend Edith Dean Painter](#) and [Friend John Hunt Painter](#) on the farm they had established near [Springdale](#), Iowa.

After meeting with Ferdinand de Lesseps, [Napoléon III](#) announced his support for the [Suez Canal](#) project.


[EGYPT](#)

Running into [Hector Berlioz](#) on a Paris street, [Richard Wagner](#) found him “in a pitiable state of health” because he had just come from an electrical treatment intended to help his nervous condition. The two of them resumed their personal, if not their professional, relationship.

News of Captain [John Brown](#)’s raid on the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#), Virginia having reached Cincinnati, the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) in his sermon described the enterprise as “worse than a crime — a blunder”<sup>74</sup> and declared that the Abolitionists, since they were non-resistants, would repudiate him. (However, upon Brown’s execution the Reverend would opinion that “Two days later my sermon exalted him to the right hand of God,” and then looking back through the perspective of old age, he would write that “Reading his career by the light of subsequent history, I am convinced that few men ever wrought so much evil.”)

## JOHN HOLLADAY LATANÉ

An anonymous letter threat was posted in New-York to the Clerk of the Court of Charlestown, Kanawha County, Virginia, warning the court not to hurt one hair on the head of [Ossawatimi Brown](#). The following day would see every city, town, and village south of the Mason/Dixon Line in flames. “We are determined to put down Slavery at any odds — Forcibly if it must — Peacefully if it can ... All of us at the North sympathize with the Martyr of [Harpers Ferry](#).” This letter would be filed in the “Letters Received” folder of Governor [Henry A. Wise](#).

Several weeks earlier  [Henry Thoreau](#) had delivered his sermon “LIFE MISSPENT” before the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)’s Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society at the Boston Music Hall on Winter Street near the Tremont Temple.



Swamp-pink and waxwork were bare October 23d; how long?

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74. We have no reason to suspect that the Reverend ever became aware that one of the participants in the raid had been a college classmate of his, a young student whom he had caused to be expelled from the college for a very minor infraction.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

His sermon had been reported by Boston newspapers and the Reverend D.C. Eddy had read one of these reviews. Eddy responded with an argumentative theological sermon of his own which, as we might expect, was quite a bit more thoroughly covered, by the Boston Journal, than Thoreau's lecture had originally been covered:



### Misspent Lives.

This was the subject of a lecture delivered at Harvard Street Church, last evening, by the pastor, Rev. D. C. Eddy, his text being Matt. vii. 26:27. The speaker referred to a recent lecture delivered in this city, by Henry D. Thoreau, on "Misspent Lives," conceiving that the lecturer had given no true idea of a model life, either in his lecture or in himself; and turned from him to one wiser than Solomon in all his glory—and the estimate by Christ of a misspent life, as one who hearing and not doing his sayings, was likened to a man building his house upon the sand—turning from the epigrammatic nonsense of the Walden Pond cynic and the transcendental mysticism of Emerson to the Great Teacher whose language was as transparent as his life, and his life an illustration of his teachings, the speaker took the following positions:

1. Every life which did not recognize human brotherhood, and which is not in itself an effort to lift the world up to God, is a misspent life. There are men all around us who do nothing to fulfill one noble purpose—never reach forth a hand to save the lost—rise up and lie down to rest without being conscious of striking of[f] the fetter of [a] single bondman, or giving to a single immortal soul a heavenward impulse. Men may make the world blaze with their deeds, and their lives be misspent. The world is none the better for many a man who has lived in it. How many men with language glowing with eloquence, leave but misspent lives; they have shown their literature and their learning, but the wounds which have festered on the breast of humanity do not heal for anything they have done. Men use their gifted tongues on great public occasions and charm their hearers, and others applaud the sawing off of the heads of bronze statues rather than the heads of vice and crime, but who can help wondering that these great men do nothing to make the world better? They are burdened with learning and the graces of literature, but what is done to draw anything from the ocean of sorrow, or add anything to the sum of human happiness?



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2. A life is misspent which is not in harmony with Christ and His salvation, which does not comprehend the Cross as its centre and rest upon the atonement as its basis. All the skill a man may have will not compensate him for the want of salvation. Salvation is what men need—Christ in his heart, will, and conscience; Christ crucified as the power of the Cross—as a living energy and the grand object of his life. 3. A life is misspent which does not make a large and conscious preparation for a future world.

A writer in one of the public journals tells us there is too much attention paid to the future life, and too little bestowed upon this world; that more attention should be given to the stomach, to the teeth, to the hair. What can such a man be thinking of? He forgets a man is to live forever. He can take care of himself, but he needs to care for his soul.

All the care of his body, and all he can amass of things of this life, will do him no good without Christ. What did God say to the man who had nothing but barns and stores? "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

How is it with you who hear me to-night? How do you feel about the great brotherhood of man? Do you feel yourself bound to the great heart of humanity? Is Christ your life and your hope? If you trust in Him, it shall be with you as it was with him who built his house upon the rock. Without Christ your misspent life shall be as he who built upon the sand, and the winds and flood beat upon that house, and it fell.

The house was crowded by an attentive audience.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRIES IN HIS JOURNAL, OCTOBER 23d-27th]



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NOT CIVIL WAR

An anonymous letter of this date, to the Clerk of Court, Kanawha County, in Charlestown VA:

Copy

☰ Clerk of the Court  
Charlestown Va

Sir. You had better caution your authorities to be careful what you— with "Ossawatimi Brown" So sure as you hurt One hair of his head— mark my word, the following day you will see every City—Town and Village South of Mason & Dixons line in Flames We are determined to put down Slavery at any odds Forcibly if it must Peacefully if it can Believe me when I tell you the end is not yet— by a long odds

All of us at the North Sympathize with the Martyr of Harpers Ferry"

On the Envelope

"Clerk of the Court

Charlestown

Kanawha Coy

Virginia"

Postmarked "New York

Oct 23 1859"




OSAWATOMIE



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

October 24, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) returned to Concord from Acton. See note he wrote in his journal on November 11th (below ) , describing the movement of autumn leaves he saw blowing in the wind while on this trip, as resembling a flock of birds.

Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) to General Charles C. Egerton, Jr.:



*Richmond Va.*

*Oct[obe]r 24th 1859*

*To Charles C. Egerton Jr.*

*Gen[era]l. Com[man]d[in]g. etc etc*

*Sir.*

*In reply to yours of the 21st. inst., I say at the earliest moment, that I do not consider the arms captured on Maryland or any other soil, by Maryland or any other troops, as belonging to the troops which captured them. I deem them the property of the criminals charged with using these arms unlawfully until they are convicted, and then these arms will be subject to forfeiture according to the judgment of the court which tries the persons accused. The arms will then become, I presume, the property of the U. States or of the State of Virginia whose jurisdiction and territory have been invaded by these persons. And if these persons are acquitted the arms captured belonging to them must be restored. They were placed in the arsenal at Harper's Ferry, and Col. Lee in command of the US. Marines, informed me that after they were there placed for safe keeping some forty or fifty of rifles, and how many pistols he could not say, were taken without leave or authority by some of the Maryland troops. These, thus taken, I beg leave respectfully to say should be restored to the ~~armory~~ Arsenal.*

*Very Respectfully*

*Yours etc*

*Henry A. Wise*



**[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 24th]**





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October 25, Tuesday: An elaborate funeral in memory of Ludwig (Louis) Spohr took place in Kassel, at public expense.

New-York Herald headline: THE EXPOSURE OF THE NIGGER-WORSHIPING INSURRECTIONISTS.

John N. Merriman to Governor [Henry A. Wise](#):



*Collectors Office*

*Georgetown So.Ca. Oct[o]b[e]r. 25. 1859*

*Sir,*

*The desire to see specemins of those Weapons captured in the late insurrection at Harpers Ferry, has been manifested by several of our largest Planters and most prominent Citizens of this Town, and requested me, to petition your Excellency for a sample of the different Weapons;*

*I therefore, in complying with the wishes of my fellow Citizens, would respectfully beg you, to send me Per Adams Express Co. in care of Messrs. Z & H. Ravenel & Co. in Charleston So.Ca. One of the captured Pikes, one do. Rifle, and one do. revolving Pistol— and to inform me of the time you require me to return same to you.*

*In conclusion Sir, permit me to convey to you the high Esteem of the Citizens of this District for your Excellency, in quelling so promptly and efficiently a Movement, which treated to desolate our Homes.*

*I am Sir with the greatest Respect*

*Your Obdt. Servant*

*John N. Merriman*

*Collector*

*His Excellency*

*Henry A. Wise*

*Governor of Virginia*

In Virginia, [John Brown](#), [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#), [Edwin Coppoc](#), [Shields Green](#), and [Aaron D. Stevens](#) (who was nearly dead anyway, needing to be propped up by the bailiffs of the court) were indicted for treason. The decision was arrived at, that each of the accused ought to be tried separately.

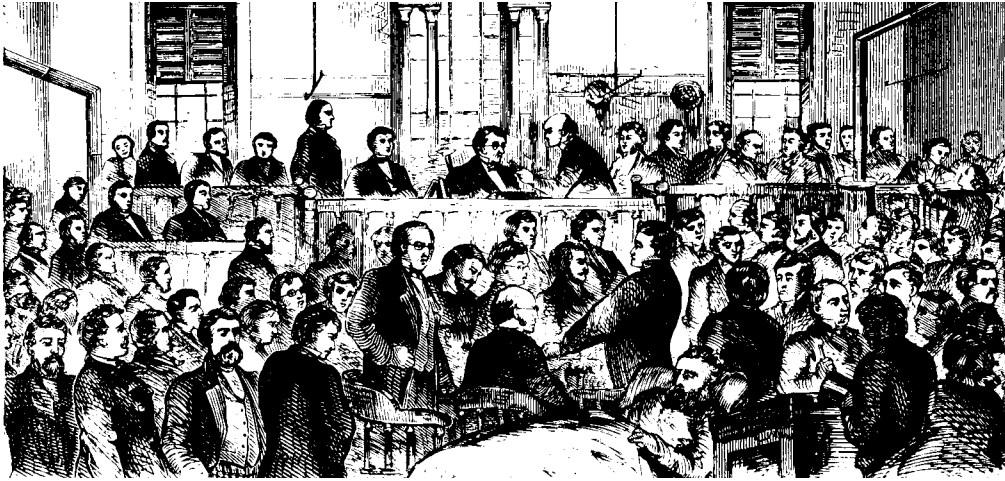
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During his portion of the trial [Copeland](#) would stand silent, refusing to participate in any manner.



Green

Copeland

Hazlett

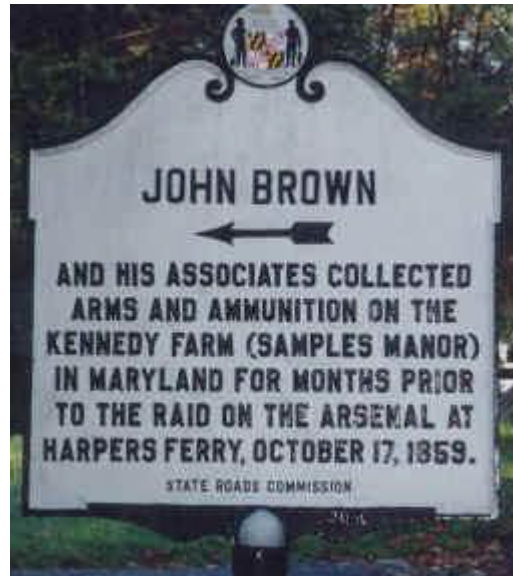
After evading capture for some months, against the advice of his comrades [John E. Cook](#) became reckless in his search for food and was captured by some local citizens (Claggett Fitzhugh and Dan Logan of Quincy) in



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Carlisle eight miles from Chambersburg PA, where Cook's wife Mary V. Kennedy Cook resided.



As an incessant and compulsive communicator he had always been considered by the Brown operatives to be indiscreet, and in a confession which would be published as a pamphlet at Charles Town in the middle of November 1859 for the benefit of Samuel C. Young, a man who had been crippled for life in the fighting at Harper's Ferry, Cook would detail for his captors all his movements — from the point of his 1st meeting with Brown after the battle of Black Jack in June 1856 until after his capture. At the last moment Cook would seek to save his neck by representing that he had been deceived through false promises. For this revelation Cook would be severely censured at the time, being termed "Judas" by the friends of Brown. Despite his confession and despite his brother-in-law A.P. Willard being the governor of Indiana, he would in the end hang for the treason and murder at [Harpers Ferry](#), one of the last to be taken to the gallows, on December 16th.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 25th]



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October 26, Wednesday: [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) and [George Luther Stearns](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy



determined that they needed to return from their temporary panicky refuge in [Québec](#), in part due to a note they had just received from [Waldo Emerson](#) assuring them that legal opinion had it that he was safe from prosecution for treason due to the opinion rendered by Boston attorney John Andrew, "I see no possible way in which any one can have done anything in Massachusetts for which he can be carried to any other state. I know nothing for which you could be tried even here."

[John E. Cook](#), who had escaped from Harpers Ferry to climb a tree and watch the carnage, was arrested in Pennsylvania along with [Albert Hazlett](#), who had not participated in the fighting.

The [Valley Spirit](#) expressed editorial dismay at learning that the town of Chambersburg PA had apparently been useful to the raiders of the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#), as a staging area.

Amos A. Laurence to Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) of Virginia:



*Boston. Oct. 26. 59.*

*Dear Sir*

*From the Telegrhic. Report of the trial of Capt. Brown it appears to be uncertain whether he will have a trial in the usual form. Permit one who loves the whole country as much as yourself to urge on you the necessity of securing this. Brown is a Puritan, whose mind has become disordered by hardship & illness. He has the qualities wh. endear him to our people & his sudden execution would send a thrill of horror through the whole North. From his blood would spring an army of martyrs all eager to die in the cause of human liberty. I am sure that I express the ~~opinion~~ desire of all conservative men here when I beg you to insist on a fair trial.*

*Respectfully utmly*

*Yr obt serv*

*Amos A. Laurence*

*His Excellly*

*Gov. Wise*

[Lydia Maria Child](#) wrote to Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) of Virginia, enclosing a note from her to [John Brown](#)



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which she asked him to read and then to deliver:

*Dear Capt Brown, Though personally unknown to you, you will recognize in my name an earnest friend of Kansas.... Believing in peace principles, I cannot sympathize with the method you chose to advance the cause of freedom. But I honor your generous intentions, I admire your courage, moral and physical, I reverence you for the humanity which tempered your zeal. I sympathize with your cruel bereavements, your suffering, and your wrongs. In brief, I love you and bless you. Thousands of hearts are throbbing with sympathy as warm as mine. I think of you night and day, bleeding in prison, surrounded by hostile faces, sustained only by trust in God and your own strong heart. I long to nurse you, to speak to you sisterly words of sympathy and consolation. I have asked permission of Gov. Wise to do so. If the request is not granted, I cherish the hope that these few words may, at least, reach your hands, and afford you some little solace. May you be strengthened by the conviction that no honest man ever sheds his blood for freedom in vain, however much he may be mistaken in his efforts. May God sustain you, and carry you through whatsoever may be in store for you! Yours with heartfelt respect, sympathy, and affection.*

*L. Maria Child*



**[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 26th]**

October 27, Thursday: [Gustav Robert Kirchhoff](#) announced his invention of a [spectroscope](#) which allowed the chemical composition of a substance to be determined, through its emission and absorption of particular wavelengths of light.

The trial of [John Brown](#) for treason and murder, before a jury of 12 white male citizens of [Harpers Ferry](#), began.

At about this point of time, in Africa, [Martin Robison Delany](#) was traveling inland into Yoruba along the Ogun River, as far as the Egba capital of Abbeokuta where he was meeting with his expeditions' fund-raiser in England, Robert Campbell, who had come from there.



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On this date the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) wrote from Worcester to his mother Louisa Wentworth Storrow Higginson: “Of course I think enough about [Brown](#), though I don’t feel sure that his acquittal or rescue would do half as much good as his being executed....” (This was not a novel attitude, for [Thoreau](#) would write “I almost fear that I may yet hear of his deliverance, doubting if a prolonged life, if any life, can do as much good as his death,” and “I have all along found myself thinking and speaking of him as physically dead,” while the Reverend [Henry Ward Beecher](#) would declare “Let no man pray that Brown be spared. Let Virginia make him a martyr,” and Brown himself, upon perusing such sentiments in a newspaper in prison, would scribble the word “Good” above them (he also stated “I am worth inconceivably more to hang than for any other purpose”).



**[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 27th]**

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October 30, Sunday: Franz Liszt was admitted to the Austrian nobility as “Franz, Ritter von Liszt.” On the same day, in Weimar, his setting of the 137th Psalm for alto, violin, and keyboard was performed for the initial time.

The trial of [John Brown](#) concluded, with a finding of guilt. The separate trials of the others indicted, [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#), [Edwin Coppoc](#), [Shields Green](#), and [Aaron D. Stevens](#), would begin, and would come to their conclusions, shortly.



Green

Copeland

Haslitt

[Henry Thoreau](#) notified [Concord](#) town officials that he would speak that evening on “The character of [John Brown](#), now in the clutches of the slaveholder.”





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## KILLED OR WOUNDED BY THE INSURGENTS AT HARPERS FERRY

|                  |                                                 |         |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Heywood Shepherd | black railroad porter                           | Killed  |
| Fontaine Beckham | white railroad agent and mayor of Harpers Ferry | Killed  |
| G.W. Turner      | white resident of Jefferson County VA           | Killed  |
| Thomas Boerly    | white resident of Harpers Ferry                 | Killed  |
| Quinn            | white Marine Corps private                      | Killed  |
| Rupert           | white Marine Corps private                      | Wounded |
| Murphy           | white resident in vicinity of Harpers Ferry     | Wounded |
| Young            | white resident in vicinity of Harpers Ferry     | Wounded |
| Richardson       | white resident in vicinity of Harpers Ferry     | Wounded |
| Hammond          | white resident in vicinity of Harpers Ferry     | Wounded |
| McCabe           | white resident in vicinity of Harpers Ferry     | Wounded |
| Dorsey           | white resident in vicinity of Harpers Ferry     | Wounded |
| Hooper           | white resident in vicinity of Harpers Ferry     | Wounded |
| Woollet          | white resident in vicinity of Harpers Ferry     | Wounded |



That evening, [Thoreau](#) delivered “A PLEA FOR CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN” in the vestry of the First Parish Meetinghouse in Concord. Emerson was present, and would report to Charles Wesley Slack in Boston that “He read it with great force & effect, & though the audience was of widely different parties, it was heard without a murmur of dissent.” In regard to Thoreau’s impassioned oration, this is what I have to offer. Take it for granite, Thoreau always knows what he is saying. Speaking not only of [John Brown](#)’s sharp tongue

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but also of his carbine bought and paid for, one of the things Henry said on the evening of October 30, 1859 was

*The tools were in the hands of one who could use them.*



This is now on page 133 of REFORM PAPERS. **But what I need to get you to understand is that it means exactly what it means, not what you maybe thought it would mean were it you who had said it.** The thing I need you to notice is that Thoreau's remark is an implicit reference to [Miguel de Cervantes's](#)

*En manos eftâ el pandero que le fabra bien tañer,  
reſpondio Sancho Pança.*



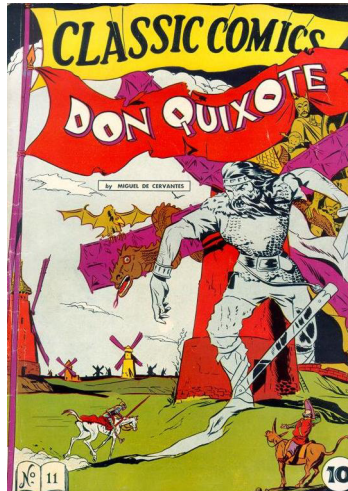
This is an aphorism from Part II, Chapter 22 of *EL INGENIOSO HIDALGO DON QUIJOTE DE LA MANCHA*.



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In current Spanish: *En manos está el pandero que le sabrán bien tañer*, or “In hands is the drum that it they know well to beat” or, rather, “The drum is in the hands of one who well knows how to thump it.” Thus Thoreau’s remark about the *rat-a-tat-tat* of Brown’s sharp tongue and Christian carbine is also an implicit reference to the most-quoted passage in WALDEN by far, the passage in which an obscure metaphor is drawn apparently on the basis of the drummer-boy *rat-a-tat-tatting* away on [Concord](#) common during the annual militia training!



What is happening in that passage of Cervantes’s book is that Sancho Panza was lowering Don Quijote into the Montecinos cave by a rope. And he was using this old Spanish proverb to say don’t worry, I know how to handle this rope, I won’t let you fall. He was practicality incarnate, all means and no end, while Don Quijote was impracticality ensouled, on his way to make his central attempt to define the relationship between reality and illusion, all end and no means.

We may well ask ourselves in what way a reference to Don Quijote might be seen as appropriate in this context of Thoreau’s defense of Brown. I can think of several right off.

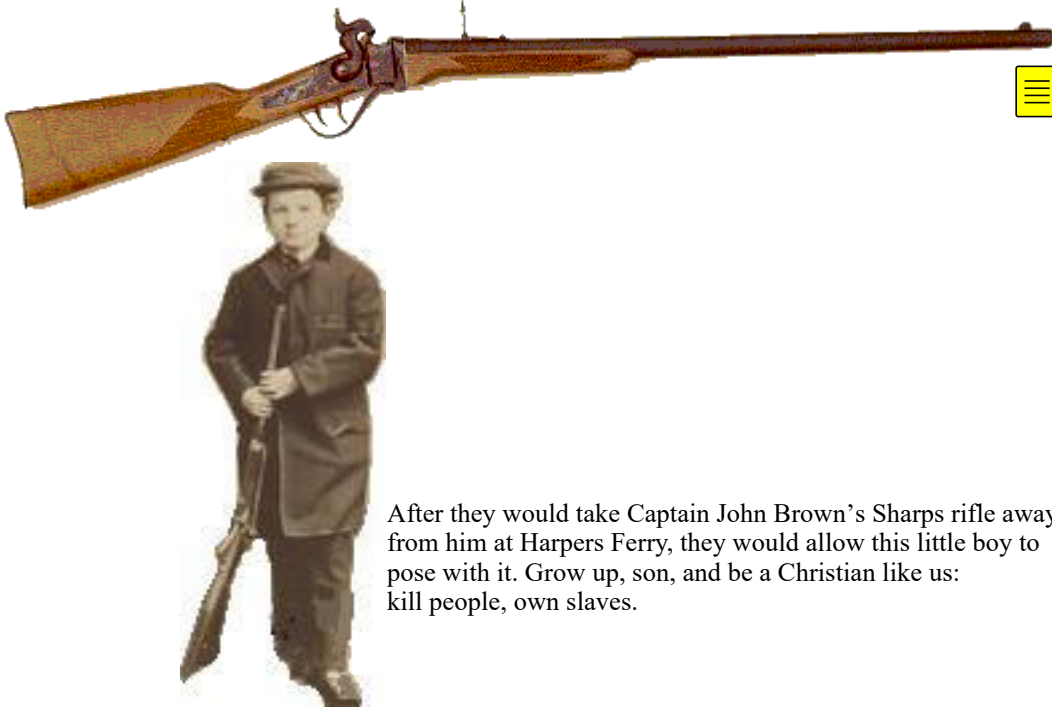
1st, many scholars would insist to us that a study of the work of Cervantes is central to any consideration of the manner in which our representations of the world can, and cannot, modify the contexts in which our lives are embedded. That Sharps rifle was supposed to be the lever by which Brown was rearranging reality, but in actuality in that world of men at arms such a stick was of influence primarily as a symbol, while Brown’s primary lever for rearranging the reality of American race relations was –as Thoreau was emphasizing– his sharp tongue. Holding that Sharps rifle in his hand only served to draw attention to that tongue of his, attention that his sharp tongue deserved. We can say Thoreau’s problem essentially was, in the case of Brown, that he had decided he could not be satisfied with reality. Refusing to repeat the gestures that custom, tradition, and

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instinct make so easy, Thoreau was insisting on the coming into being of our myth of equality and fraternity.



After they would take Captain John Brown's Sharps rifle away from him at Harpers Ferry, they would allow this little boy to pose with it. Grow up, son, and be a Christian like us: kill people, own slaves.

2d, Don Quijote was *un hombre exageradamente grave y serio o puntilloso*, and this is a fine and accurate description not only of Concord's own knight of the woebegone countenance, [Bronson Alcott](#), but also of [John Brown](#). If Alcott could be said to have been a Quijote whose favorite reading was the New Testament, Brown was a Quijote whose favorite reading was the Old. Don Quijote said

These saints and knights were of the same profession as myself, which is the calling of arms. Only there is this difference between them and me, that they were saints, and fought with divine weapons, and I am a sinner and fight with human ones.

3d, there is the problem of the ridiculous mismatch of means and objectives about which Brown commented in his note on the morning of his [hanging](#). Brown wanted a world of justice and peace and dignity so he set about enthusiastically to kill us until we got his idea, which is a fine way to get someone's attention but is inherently self-defeating.

4th, in associating Brown with Don Quijote, [Thoreau](#) was making an implicit reference to the freeing of slaves as a knightly suspension of the ethical — for Don Quijote's pity, compassion, and love came to outweigh the rigor of justice in that knight's liberating of the galley slaves, and in the declaration he made to the guards of



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the slaves, and in his comments to Sancho and the priest. He said

It is not right that honorable men should be executioners of others.

Finally, this “tool” aphorism extracted from the episode in which Don Quijote descended on a rope into the cave of Montecinos is central to the story’s process of *sanchificación* of the knight’s spirituality and *quijotización* of the squire’s carnality. By virtue of their shared adventures, the righteously indignant northern white American and the desperately indignant southern white American needed to figure out a way to rid themselves of a society based on shackles: they needed to sanchify and quijotize each other. That’d be preferred to our northern Quijotes and southern Panzas using their efficient tools to kill each other standing in rows, which was otherwise the obvious prospect. When Don Quijote emerged from the cave of Montecinos he said to Sancho Panza

Everything that offers some difficulty seems impossible to you.

But he added

Time will pass.

In this writing I will not only attempt to salvage Thoreau’s talk about Christian carbines and sharp tongues by linking it (via its implicit referent in Cervantes’s *rub-a-dub-dub* text about the foolishness of desperate acts of chivalry) to its implicit referent in Thoreau’s *rat-a-tat-tat* text about the foolishness of a life of quiet desperation.

I will also demonstrate that this sound metaphor of Thoreau’s –the distant different drummer– is, itself, an implicit reference to a [Quaker](#) non-violent metaphor of the inner light in common usage among members of the [Religious Society of Friends](#), particularly those of the liberal faction including Friend [Elias Hicks](#) and his student Friend [Lucretia Mott](#), and that such a metaphor cannot be bent –as it is commonly now bent by the unspirited– to sponsor the path of violence. Thoreau left himself an escape hatch and, in his appeal for sympathy for Captain Brown after that man’s desperate attempt to set free the despairing slaves of America, neither explicitly nor implicitly sanctioned any of [John Brown](#)’s violent means. I would maintain that Thoreau’s deportment and his words subsequent to the ill-advised [Harpers Ferry](#) raid in 1859 were precisely



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parallel to Friend Lucretia's deputation and her words after the ill-advised "Christiana Riot" in 1851.



Thoreau said in public, in regard to American slavery, that he did not wish to kill nor to be killed, but could foresee circumstances in which both these things would be by him unavoidable (REFORM PAPERS 133). Playing to his audience, our author elided the vast difference between killing and dying precisely as Richardson elided Charles Baudelaire. It was only in Thoreau's private notes during his lifetime—to his Journal that is, and although as he says there was no lock on the door of his cabin there was in fact a lock on the desk in which he kept his Journal—that he was able to say plainly that **when he said “both these things” he meant precisely “both these things,”** not one and, if he turned out to be a lucky and competent killer, not the other, that if it came to the sacrificing of others to his own principles, this would necessarily involve his own simultaneous self-sacrifice for his principles, that he meant he might decide to not be alive rather than continue to be alive in a world that also included slavery.<sup>75</sup> Now, Søren Aabye Kierkegaard pointed out in a writing that,

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75. There is a phrase “noble army of Martyrs” in the BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER that came into use in 1549 that may explain [Thoreau](#)'s remark about becoming willing to kill, or to die, to end enslavement. The phrase may have come into the BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER from the *TE DEUM*, quite a bit older.



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although it dates to the same year of 1859, was unavailable to [Thoreau](#),<sup>76</sup> that

Assuming then that a person is the victim of an illusion, and that in order to communicate the truth to him the first task, rightly understood, is to remove the illusion – if I do not begin by deceiving him, I must begin with direct communication. But direct communication presupposes that the receiver's ability to receive is undisturbed. But here such is not the case; an illusion stands in the way. That is to say, one must first of all use the caustic fluid. But this caustic means is negativity, and negativity understood in relation to the communication of the truth is precisely the same as deception. What then does it mean "to deceive"? It means that one does not begin **directly** with the matter one wants to communicate, but begins by accepting the other man's illusion as good money.



I am not saying Thoreau was wrong to elide in this way in that place at that time, for he was doing his level best to communicate with a bunch of people who were getting ready to line up and shoot each other down in windows, and also I was not there and also I have great respect for his judgment, but I am saying that if there was a time for this sort of elision, it is now past. If not then, at least now, we should face the issue squarely. But unfortunately, as I said, the issue is not being faced squarely. For instance, on the night of July 10th in the Center Galleria of Worcester, an actor employed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, David Barto, sponsored in part by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, re-enacted [Thoreau's](#) lecture.

Worcester's Mechanics Hall where the lecture was originally delivered was under restoration, but every effort was made for verisimilitude and Barto was able to lean on the wooden lectern that Thoreau had used on November 3, 1859 at Mechanics Hall. My impression is that Barto makes a Thoreau who is entirely too belligerent, for instance humorously threatening to beat children with his walking stick should they ask questions at the wrong times, humorously inviting one fellow to join him outside for a fight after the talk should he fail to follow Thoreau's rules, etc. Therefore, in the question and answer period, I raised my hand

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76. Søren Aabye Kierkegaard. THE POINT OF VIEW FOR MY WORK AS AN AUTHOR. NY: Harper & Row, 1962, pages 25-6.



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and posed the following question to Barto in his rôle as [Thoreau](#):

I have heard you, and am troubled, troubled by what would seem to be a studied ambiguity on an issue of the greatest relevance. Tell me, in the dark of the night when you could not sleep, and you scratched these lines frantically across scraps of paper with your pencil - can you recollect that frame of mind?- what was your intention? If it came to kill or be killed, for those are two very different things, if it came to the taking of the life of another for liberty, or giving your own for liberty -for these are two very different things- if it came to continuing your life but as a murderer- if it came to the point of doing evil so that good will come- what, sir, was your secret intention as you scratched out your draft of this speech? Is it your intention to teach us, by your life, how and when to **die** or how and when to **kill**?

In response Barto feigned anger and told me I had no right to inquire as to his private musings. He was unable or unwilling to address the question as posed. Need I mention that this might have got him in trouble with his employer, an agency which also employs a number of armed men in blue and a number of armed men in green, and instructs these armed employees in the fine art of when and how to kill in the name of their employer?

#### “A PLEA FOR CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN”

This topic of elision is an interesting topic for those of us who find this sort of topic interesting. While [Thoreau](#) was delivering his “A PLEA FOR CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN” at the Concord Town Hall, the Reverend [Henry Ward Beecher](#) was delivering a sermon in his Plymouth Church in Brooklyn. Later on he would revise this sermon for publication, so we can credit it with some seriousness of preparation, and yet in the sermon he was portraying the raid on [Harpers Ferry](#) as having been perpetrated by 17 white men who had gone South without any black sponsorship or involvement and, in their whiteness, had created a race panic: “Seventeen white men surrounded two thousand, and held them in duress.”

A black newspaper would need to comment upon this elision, as of course it had been the noticing of men of mixed race among the members of that invading party which had set off the pronounced race panic: “Mr. Beecher must have read the papers, must have read that there were twenty-two invaders, seventeen white and five black. Why does he omit all mention of the latter? Were they not men?”<sup>77</sup>

We note that in this speech [Thoreau](#) made use of the political term of art “Buncombe.”<sup>78</sup>

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77. It is very clear from several other things that the Reverend [Henry Ward Beecher](#) had written, that had he been forced to respond to this “Were they not men?” rhetorical question, he would easily have responded that indeed they were men — inasmuch as they were all of mixed race rather than being in that “low animal condition” (his category, his words) of pure blackness.

78. Buncombe is a county in western North Carolina; the representative from that district in Congress had a reputation for blathering on the public record and through the newspapers simply because he thought his constituents in Buncombe County would thereby think he was really some hot potato of a Congressman. “Buncombe” came to mean blowing hot air to little purpose beyond self-aggrandizement, an expression that showed up even in Thomas Carlyle’s LATTER DAY PAMPHLETS because Waldo Emerson had deployed this Americanism when he and Carlyle met: “A Parliament speaking through reporters to Buncombe and the twenty-seven millions, mostly fools.”





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October 31, Monday: George H. Hoyt, [John Brown](#)'s counsel, wrote to J.W. Le Barnes, offering his initial impression of [Aaron Dwight Stevens](#): "Stevens is in the same cell with Brown. I have frequent talks with him. He's in a most pitiable condition physically, his wounds being of the most painful and dangerous character. He has now four balls in his body, two of these being about the head and neck. He bears his sufferings with grim and silent fortitude, never complaining and absolutely without hope. He is a splendid looking young fellow. Such black and penetrating eyes! Such an expansive brow! Such a grand chest and limbs! He was the best, and in fact the only man Brown had who was a good soldier besides being reliable otherwise."

In this timeframe [Brown](#) received a visit in his cell in Charlestown, Virginia from a Winchester, Massachusetts sculptor, [Edward Augustus Brackett](#). The sculptor had been paid \$130 in gold coins to prepare a marble bust for display in the foyer of [George Luther Stearns](#) in Medford, Massachusetts, and needed to carefully measure the prisoner's face.



[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [H.G.O. Blake](#):

*Concord Oct 31<sup>st</sup>*

*Mr Blake.*

*I spoke to my townsmen last evening on "the Character of Capt. Brown, now in the clutches of the slaveholder". I should like to speak to any company in Worcester who may wish to hear me, & will come, if only my expenses are paid.*

*I think that we should express ourselves at once, while Brown is alive. The sooner the better. Perhaps Higginson may like to have a meeting.*

*Wednesday evening would be a good time.*

*The people here are deeply interested in the matter.*

*Let me have an answer as soon as may be.*

*Henry D. Thoreau*

*P.S. I may be engaged toward the end of the week.*

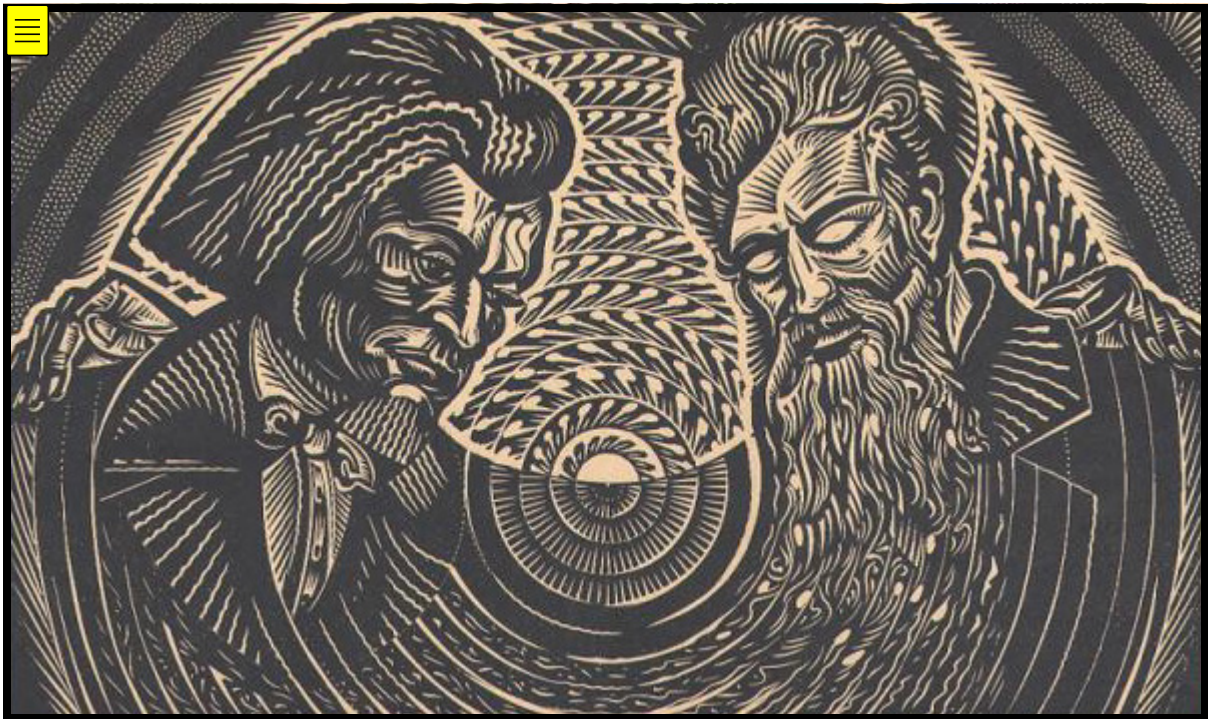
**THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON**

Waldo Emerson wrote to Charles Wesley Slack in Boston, "I understand that there is some doubt about Mr. Douglass's keeping his engagement for Tuesday next. If there is a vacancy, I think you cannot do a greater public good than to send for Mr. Thoreau, who has read last night here a discourse on the history & character of Captain John Brown, which ought to be heard or read by every man in the Republic." Henry Thoreau was sent a telegram by Slack,<sup>79</sup> addressed

TO HENRY D. THOREAU OR RALPH WALDO EMERSON. CONCORD.

informing that

THOREAU MUST LECTURE ... TUESDAY EVENING-- DOUGLASS FAILS--



One thing we need to consider, in dealing with the heavy emotion and heavy oratory of this address, is that Thoreau knew he was standing in for a most impassioned and implicated black orator, and knew that his audience had been hoping to hear this most impassioned and implicated orator. While he could not darken his skin — he should certainly attempt to darken his tones.

To: HDT  
From: Charles Slack  
Date: 10/31/59

79. Stimpert, James. A GUIDE TO THE CORRESPONDENCE IN THE CHARLES WESLEY SLACK MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION: 1848-1885. Kent State University, Library, Special Collections



RACE WAR,

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[Advertisement for the American Telegraph Company]

Boston [O]ct 31 1859

SEND THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE, SUBJECT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS:

To Henry D. Thoreau or

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Concord.

Thoreau must lecture for [F]raternity

Tuesday Evening-- Douglass fails--

Letter mailed

Charles W. Slack

11 Bs 28--

[Frederick Douglass](#), [Waldo Emerson](#), and [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote separately to Charles Wesley Slack of Boston in regard to Douglass's lecture engagement there which was scheduled for November 1st, which Douglass could not complete. These three letters are at the American Antiquarian Society.

Thoreau would speak before a crowd of 2,500.

## WHAT I'M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF

November: At some point after the failure of the raid on the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#), [Osborn Perry Anderson](#) sought refuge in the home of [Henry Watson](#) and his wife on Mt. Moriah Street in the "Little Africa" district of Green Township, near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

Early in the month [Edwin Morton](#) sailed from Boston for England as a means of protecting [Gerrit Smith](#) from exposure before the investigative committee (while Smith, as a way to provide cover for himself, was spending some time in an insane asylum). While in England he would be chumming around at Shrewsbury and Hodnet with Thomas Cholmondeley (whom he had recently met while Cholmondeley was visiting [Henry Thoreau](#) in Concord). He would remain through the winter and then briefly visit France before returning across the Atlantic when the coast had become clear in 1860.

Although he characterized himself as a "pretty rigid Episcopalian," [Amos Adams Lawrence](#) claimed to harbor no prejudice against "any body of men who love the Lord Jesus Christ," and agreed that the Congregationalists did love the Lord Jesus Christ. He therefore assented to the use of his \$10,000 for a Congregational college in the [Kansas Territory](#).

[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) was publishing his long poem "America."

[Mrs. Mary Ann Day Brown](#) wrote to Governor of Virginia [Henry A. Wise](#), petitioning for the "mortal remains of my husband and sons." With his response the Governor enclosed a copy of an order to Major General



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William Taliaferro to “deliver to your order the mortal remains ... [and] to guard you sacredly in your solemn mission.” On the Governor’s orders, a party of men under Alfred Barbour, Superintendent of the United States Armory, gathered at the site of the mass burial upstream from [Harpers Ferry](#) on the bank of the Shenandoah River and found “two large mounds of earth, freshly thrown up.” One foot down they came upon “a body which had been buried with the face down, and was then in so advanced a state of decomposition as apparently to render identification impossible.”

These words by [Sanborn](#) were appearing in [Douglass’ Monthly](#): “It is an effeminate and cowardly age which calls a man a lunatic because he rises to such self-forgetful heroism, as to count his own life worth nothing in comparison with the freedom of millions of his fellows.... The Christian blood of Old [John Brown](#) will not cease to cry from the ground long after the clamors of alarm and consternation of the dealers in the bodies and souls of men will have ceased to arrest attention.”<sup>80</sup>

An editorial bearing the title “Captain John Brown Not Insane” argued that “His entire procedure in this matter disproves the charge that he was prompted by an impulse of mad revenge, and shows that he was moved by the highest principles of philanthropy. His carefulness of the lives of unarmed persons —his humane and courteous treatment of his prisoners —his cool self-possession all through his trial —and especially his calm, dignified speech on receiving his sentence, all conspire to show that he was neither insane nor actuated by vengeful passion; and we hope the country has heard the last of John Brown’s madness.” [Bob Pepperman Taylor](#) would point up, in 1996, the similarities between this and [Henry Thoreau](#)’s “A Plea for Captain John Brown,” delivered as a lecture in Boston at a meeting in which Thoreau had been asked to stand in for Douglass: “Like Thoreau, Douglass insists that [slavery](#) is a system of brute force that must be ‘met with its own weapons.’ Like Thoreau, Douglass’s primary concern is to defend [John Brown](#)’s acts from those who discredit them as insane or irrational or desperate. Like Thoreau, Douglass holds that our lack of sympathy for Brown’s moral principles is evidence of our own moral sloth and deterioration. And, like Thoreau, Douglass holds that what is compelling about Brown is that he is an example of a just man who found the strength to resist injustice, a rare case of a man acknowledging and living up to the moral obligations facing every citizen: ‘Posterity will owe everlasting thanks to John Brown for lifting up once more to the gaze of a nation grown fat and flabby on the garbage of lust and oppression, a true standard of heroic philanthropy, and each coming generation will play its installment of the debt.’”

**WHAT I WONDER IS, IN WHICH DIRECTION THE INFLUENCE WAS FLOWING. WHAT IS THE TIME SEQUENCE HERE? DID THIS NEWSPAPER ARTICLE APPEAR FIRST? DID THOREAU READ IT? MIGHT THOREAU HAVE BEEN SAYING SOME THINGS, AS DOUGLASS’S REPRESENTATIVE, THAT WERE MORE TYPICAL OF DOUGLASS’S ATTITUDES THAN OF HIS OWN?**

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80. Philip S. Foner. LIFE AND WRITINGS OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, Volume II, page 458.

Meanwhile the body of Douglass was sailing away on the *Nova Scotian*, for the safety of English soil.



The Reverend Edwin M. Wheelock declared, in the Boston Music Hall renowned for its comfortable seating of huge audiences, that “The gallows from which he ascends into heaven will be in our politics what the cross is to our religion.”<sup>81</sup>

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81. Actually, that gallows, after it had served its purpose a number of times, would be reworked and would become the front portico of a home in Charlestown, Virginia. –Sorta makes one wonder what became of the True Cross, doesn’t it?



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“Brutus” to Governor [Henry A. Wise](#), undated, presumably November:



*Sir*

*You are very Eloquent in denouncing old Brown, as a Vile traitor*

*Because he wished to free the Poor Black Slaves;*

*But how different you are in speaking of George Washington; the Chief of the White Rebels, "Consistency thou are a jewel"*

*Oh how gloriously, and God-like to oppose British Slavery,*

*To shoot, murder, hang confiscate, axe any thing to gain Freedom; Boston then was the Cradle of Liberty, now the nursery of treason;*

*"How very strange that wrong and right;*

*"Should all depend on Black and white"*

*If it was right for the whites, Pray inform us how it is wrong for the*

*Blacks, "Sauce for the goose ought to be sauce for the gander"*

*George Washington could hang Major Andre, and help to Rob England of her Property; and he Elevated to the Presidency*

*But, old Brown must be Elevated to a gibbet,*

*"honest Iago"*

*Now Sir we wish to inform you, that this is not the last attempt that will be made to aid the Poor Slaves; you may tremble*

*For fear, for come it will like a thunderbolt; though one*

*Two, or ten may fail and suffer, others will arise untill*

*The "Black star is erased from america's flag*

*Yours until*

*Death*

*Brutus*

*There as many a wise been a wisecare*



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An anonymous missive to Governor [Henry A. Wise](#), undated, presumably November:



*Mr Wise Sir, By a Virginia jury John Brown has been convicted as a criminal. And for what? For daring to obey that divine Command "If ye would that men should do too you do ye even so too them," If Mr. Brown committed an error it was an error of the head- not of the heart. But Sir, "Too err is human. to forgive divine." You have it in your power to prove you can be magnanimous to a noble foe. do it- and the blessings of millions shall be yours- Fail to do it- and you shall have touched a chord that shall not cease to vibrate till "The bonds of the oppressor shall be broken and the oppressed go free" Yea, though this Union of ours should be dissolved in blood*

*Give me Liberty, Or give me death*

November 1, Tuesday: [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) read portions of his poem "[America](#)" before the [Concord Lyceum](#).

[John Brown](#) wrote from his cell to a [Quaker](#):

*"You know that Christ once armed Peter;  
so also in my case I think he put a sword in my hand."*



← **It had been George Washington's sword that he had had in his hand.**



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[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to Charles Wesley Slack in Boston to make arrangements: “I will come to Boston as desired. My subject will be ‘Capt. John Brown’....” He delivered “A Plea for Captain John Brown” that evening to a crowd of 2,500 at the Boston Music Hall, and the lecture would be widely reported in the newspapers.

The following is a description of the site of the lecture from a guide book published in 1856, starting on page 47:





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This spacious edifice stands opposite the Tremont House, Tremont Street. Of a rich and warm brown tint, produced by a coating of mastic, it presents a peculiarly substantial and elegant frontage. It is seventy-five feet in height, and, with the exception of ten feet by sixty-eight which is left open on the north side for light, the building covers an area of thirteen thousand feet.

Passing through the great central doorway, we find ourselves in the spacious entrance hall. On the first floor we observe on our right and left hand two ticket offices, and a broad flight of stairs also on either hand, each of which at their summit terminates in a landing, from whence to right and left diverge two flights of similar staircases, one landing you in the centre of the main hall, and the other to the rear part and the gallery.

The MAIN HALL is a magnificent apartment. The utter absence of gilding and coloring on its walls renders it far more imposing and grand in appearance than if it had been elaborately ornamented with auriferous and chromatic splendors. It is one hundred and twenty-four feet long, seventy-two feet wide, and fifty feet high. Around the sides of it runs a gallery supported on trusses, so that no pillars intervene between the spectators and the platform, to obstruct the view. The front of this gallery is balustraded, and by this means a very neat and uniform effect is secured. The side galleries project over the seats below about seven feet. They are fitted with rows of nicely-cushioned and comfortable seats, and are not so high as to render the ascent to them wearisome in the least degree. The front gallery, though it projects into the hall only ten feet, extends back far enough to give it more than three times that depth.

Directly opposite this gallery is the platform, with its gracefully-panelled, semicircular front. This platform, covered with a neat oil cloth, communicates with the side galleries by a few steps, for-the convenience of large choirs. There are also several avenues of communication from the platform to the apartments, dressing rooms, &c., behind, which are exceedingly convenient, and are far superior to the places of exit and entrance from and to any other place of the kind that we have ever seen.

From the front of the platform the floor of the hall gradually rises so as to afford every person in the hall a full and unobstructed view of the speakers or vocalists, as the case may be. The seats in the galleries rise in like manner. The seats on the hall floor are admirably arranged in a semicircular form from the front of the platform, so that every face is directed towards the speaker or singer. They are each one numbered, have iron ends, are capped with mahogany, and are completely cushioned with a



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drab-colored material. Each slip is capable of containing ten or twelve persons, with an aisle at each extremity, and open from end to end.

The side walls of the hall are very beautifully ornamented in panels, arched and decorated with circular ornaments, which would be difficult properly to describe without the aid of accompanying drawings; but as views of the interior of the Temple will soon be common enough, the omission here will be of little consequence. As was intimated, there is no fancy coloring; it is a decorated and relieved surface of dead white, and the effect, lighted as it is from above by large panes of rough plate glass, is beautifully chaste. The only color observable in the hall is the purple screen behind the diamond open work at the back of the platform, and which forms a screen in front of the organ.

The ceiling is very finely designed in squares, at all intersections of which are twenty-eight gas burners, with strong reflectors, and a chandelier over the orchestra, shedding a mellow but ample light over the hall. By this arrangement the air heated by innumerable jets of gas is got rid of, and the lights themselves act as most, efficient ventilators. The eyes are likewise protected from glare; and should an escape of gas take place, from its levity it passes up through shafts to the outside, and does not contaminate the atmosphere below. Under the galleries are common burners. There are for day illumination twelve immense plates of glass, ten feet long, four feet wide, placed in the ceiling, in the spring of the arch, and open directly to the outer light, and by sixteen smaller ones under the galleries.

The whole of the flooring of the hall, in the galleries, the body of it, and of the platform, consists of two layers of boards, with the interstices between them filled by a thick bed of mortar. The advantages of this in an acoustical point of view must be obvious to all. Another advantage is, that the applause made by the audience in this great hall does not disturb the people who may at the same time be holding a meeting in the other hall below -- a very important consideration.

There are eight flights of stairs leading from the floors of the main hall, and four from the galleries, the aggregate width of which is over fifty feet.

The Boston Young Men's Christian Association occupy several beautiful rooms up one flight of stairs, which are admirably adapted for their present uses and occupants, and are rented by the Association for twelve hundred dollars per annum, though it is estimated that they are worth at least fifteen hundred dollars; but the Temple is owned by a church who were very desirous that a religious association should occupy them.

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The great organ, built by the Messrs. Hook, is one of the finest instruments ever constructed in this country. Its bellows is worked by steam.

The Tremont Temple, besides the great hall, contains a lesser one, called THE MEIONAON, the main entrance to which is through the northerly passage way, opposite the doors of the Tremont House; this avenue is about seven feet wide. The southerly passage way serves as an outlet from this lesser temple.

Perhaps the reader, who may not have been initiated into the mysteries of Greek literature, may thank us a definition of this strange-looking word, "Meionaon." It is so called from two Greek words — meion, signifying *less, smaller*, and naon, *temple* — Lesser Temple. It is pronounced Mi-o-na-on. This lesser temple is situated back from the street, and directly under the great hall. It is seventy-two feet long by fifty-two feet wide, and about twenty-five and a half feet high. Not so elaborately adorned as its neighbor overhead, this hall is remarkably chastely and beautifully fitted up, and within its walls the religious society of Tremont Street Baptist Church worship. Its walls are relieved by pilasters supporting arches. The seats are similarly arranged to those in the hall above and are equally comfortable and commodious in all respects. At one end is a platform, on which, on Sabbath days, stands a beautiful little pulpit, of dark walnut, and cushioned with crimson velvet. At the other extremity of the hall is a gallery for a choir; back of it stands a neat little organ. The place is beautifully adapted for sound, and competent judges say from their own experience that it is a remarkably easy place to speak in. From the hall to the outer door the way is through a broad passage way covered with Manilla matting let into the floor, so that little dirt can be brought in from the street; and as the doors swing on noiseless hinges, no interruption from scuffling of feet or slammings can ever occur.

THE CUPOLA.—In making our way thither we travel over the ceiling of the great hall, dropping our heads as we pass beneath roof and rafter, to save our hat and skull, and beholding beneath our feet a great network of gas-piping connected with the burners of the hall under us. In long rows are square ventilators, which discharge their streams of vitiated air on the outside.

The cupola forms a spacious observatory, glazed all round, and from every window is obtained a charming view, the whole forming one of the most superb panoramas that we ever witnessed. From this elevated spot may be seen the adjacent villages and towns, the harbor and its islands, the city institutions, churches, houses, and shipping. In short, the whole city and vicinity lies at our feet.



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While the speeches were going on, after losing two of her sons –their mutilated bodies unceremoniously dumped into an unmarked pit at midnight by the US Army– [Mary Ann Day Brown](#) was still waiting at “Roadside” in Cheltenham Hills outside Philadelphia, the home of Friends [Lucretia](#) and [James Mott](#), to lose her



husband as well.



The Staunton [Spectator](#) contained a report from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, detailing the capture of [John E. Cook](#) and providing a biographical sketch. Their West Augusta Guard would be called up to keep the peace



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during the trials at Charles Town.



We find a note in [Bronson Alcott](#)'s journal about Thoreau reading this lecture on [John Brown](#) at the Boston Music Hall on this evening — and again in Worcester on Monday, November 3rd. In addition, the [Boston Journal](#) included a notice that, the scheduled speaker, [Frederick Douglass](#), being unable to attend, it would be Thoreau who would deliver the 5th lecture, on John Brown, in the Fraternity Lectures series. The Reverend [John Albee](#) was present for this lecture and it was, he would report, his 2d sighting of Thoreau.



**[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRIES IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 1st-4th]**

November 2, Wednesday: [Thomas Russell](#) and [Mary Ellen "Nellie" Taylor Russell](#) visited [John Brown](#) in his cell in Charlestown, Virginia. Mr. Russell had intended to counsel with Brown as a lawyer in his defense, but arrived too late, after the conviction had been declared. According to Stephen Oates's *TO PURGE THIS LAND WITH BLOOD* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), Brown expressed to these friends and abolitionists from Boston some bitter feelings toward [Frederick Douglass](#) for not having been willing to participate. Mrs. Russell had brought a needle with her and set about mending his torn and cut coat. When she sent the guard in search of a clothes-brush, she had an opportunity for a few private words with the prisoner, and her husband had an opportunity to inspect the chimney, noticing it to be large enough for a man to be pulled up to the roof through (he would later add, that although it might have been possible to get out of the jailhouse, it would have been most difficult to evade immediate recapture). At the end, when Mrs. Russell kissed Brown goodbye, he said "Now, go," his mouth trembling. Judge Russell would write of this encounter:

I was just in time to hear the sentence of death pronounced on Brown, and to hear that magnificent speech in which, instead of assuming that his hearers were Christians, and arguing on that basis, he said: "I see a book kissed here which I suppose to be the Bible, or at least the New Testament," from which he inferred that Christianity was not quite unknown. I then went with Mrs. Russell to see him in the jail, and found him in the best of spirits. He said: "I have no fault to find with the manner of

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my death; the disgrace of hanging does not trouble me in the least. Indeed, I know that the very errors by which my scheme was marred were decreed before the world was made. I had no more to do with the course I pursued than a shot leaving a cannon has to do with the spot where it shall fall." He was satisfied with what he had done.

On the very day that [John Brown](#), having been found guilty of treason and murder, was being condemned to be hanged, a printed circular was being posted in Boston, asking for help in covering his legal expenses. The circular was signed by the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy, [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#), [Samuel Eliot Sewall](#), and [Waldo Emerson](#). Not only would the attorneys Samuel Chilton and Hiram Griswold need to be satisfied, but soon the others accused, [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#), [Edwin Coppoc](#), [Shields Green](#), and [Aaron D. Stevens](#), who were still being represented by attorneys George Sennott and George H. Hoyt, were inevitably going to be condemned to be hanged.

The Boston [Atlas and Daily Bee](#) carried a report of [Henry Thoreau](#)'s lecture on [John Brown](#).



This would be the courthouse in what would become Charles Town, West Virginia at which [John Brown](#) was tried, as of the Year Of Our Lord 1900:



The wounded [John Brown](#) lay on his cot and addressed this court in this building on this day in Charles Town, Virginia:

I have, may it please the court, a few words to say.  
In the first place, I deny everything but what I have all along admitted, — the design on my part to free slaves. I intended certainly to have made a clean thing of that matter, as I did last winter, when I went into Missouri and took slaves without the snapping of a gun on either side, moved them through the country, and finally left them in Canada. I designed to do the same thing again, on a larger scale. That was all I intended. I never did intend murder, or treason, or the destruction of property, or to excite or incite slaves to rebellion, or to make insurrection.  
I have another objection; and that is, it is unjust that I should





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suffer such a penalty. Had I interfered in the manner which I admit, and which I admit has been fairly proved (for I admire the truthfulness and candor of the greater portion of the witnesses who have testified in this case), -had I so interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends -either father, mother, sister, wife, or children, or any of that class -and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right; and every man in this court would have deemed it an act worthy of reward rather than punishment. The court acknowledges, as I suppose, the validity of the law of God. I see a book kissed here which I suppose to be the **BIBLE**, or at least the New Testament. That teaches me that all things whatsoever I would that men should do to me, I should do even so to them. It teaches me further to "remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them." I endeavored to act up to that instruction. I say, I am too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done -as I have always freely admitted I have done- in behalf of His despised poor, was not wrong, but right. Now if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments. -I submit; so let it be done!

Let me say one word further.

I feel entirely satisfied with the treatment I have received on my trial. Considering all the circumstances, it has been more generous than I expected. I feel no consciousness of my guilt. I have stated from the first what was my intention, and what was not. I never had any design against the life of any person, nor any disposition to commit treason, or excite slaves to rebel, or make any general insurrection. I never encouraged any man to do so, but always discouraged any idea of any kind.

Let me say also, a word in regard to the statements made by some to those connected with me. I hear it has been said by some of them that I have induced them to join me. But the contrary is true. I do not say this to injure them, but as regretting their weakness. There is not one of them but joined me of his own accord, and the greater part of them at their own expense. A number of them I never saw, and never had a word of conversation with, till the day they came to me; and that was for the purpose I have stated.

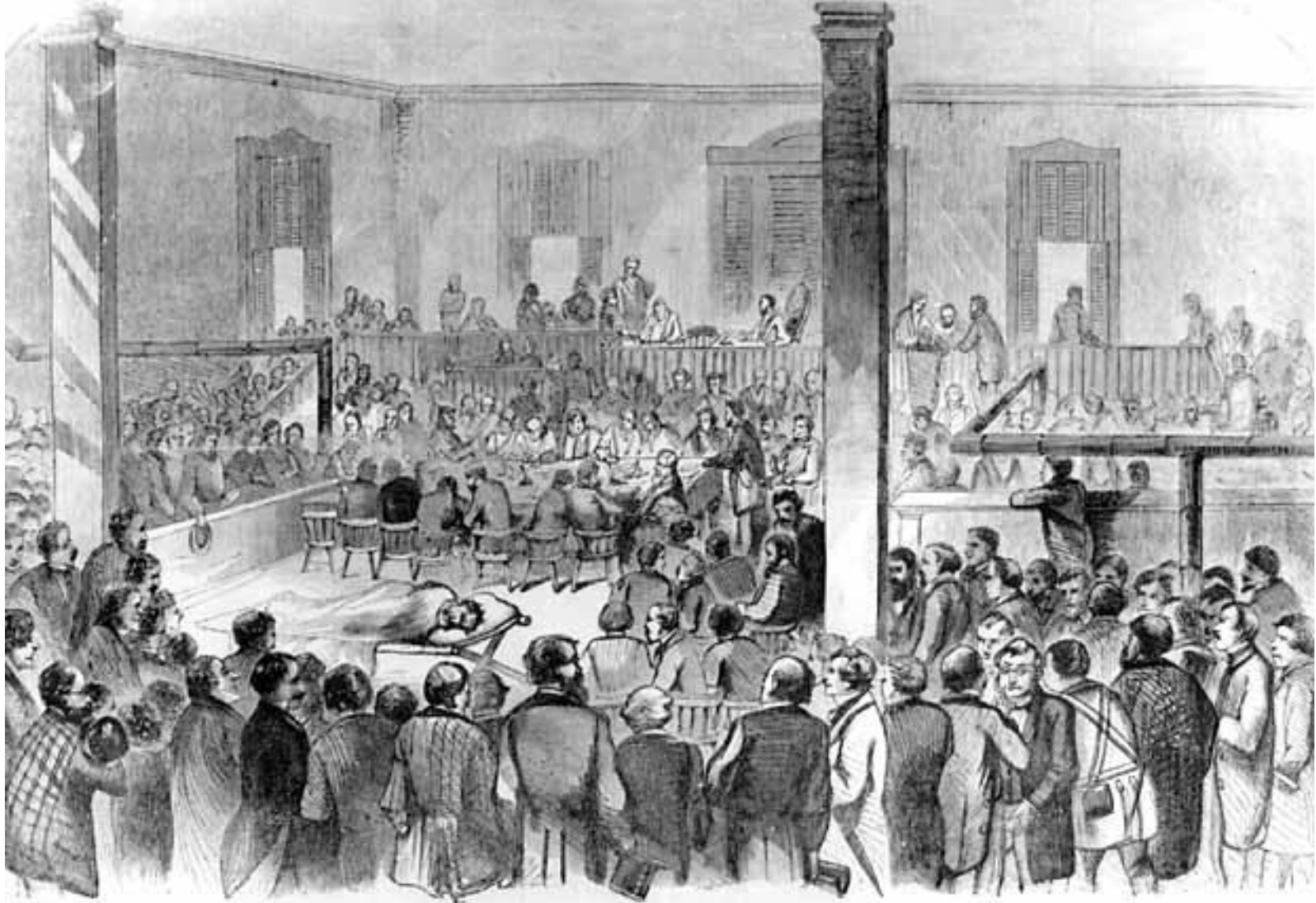
Now I have done.

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“Porte Crayon,” which is to say, the illustrator David Strother, was depicting the scene inside the courthouse for the benefit of a news-eager nation. This is what we might have seen had one entire wall of the building been cut away as is done routinely now for interior scenes on the sound stages of Hollywood:

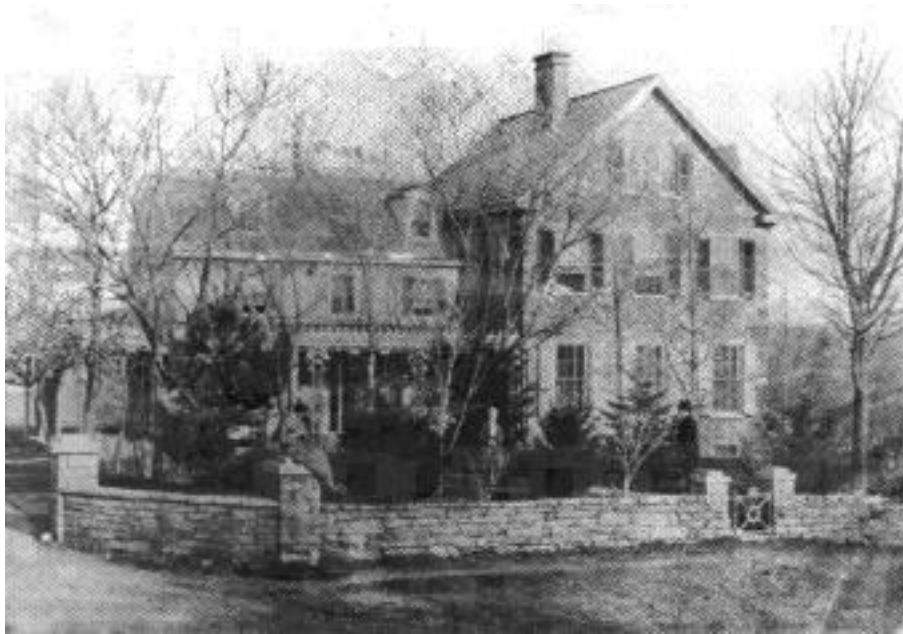


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After the week-long trial it took 45 minutes of deliberation for the Virginia jury to find this unrepentant Captain [John Brown](#) guilty of murder, treason, and inciting a [slave](#) insurrection and to sentence him to be hanged by the neck until he be dead. Later, from his cell, the condemned man wrote his wife Mrs. [Mary Ann Day Brown](#) at "Roadside" near Philadelphia:



*I was sentenced to be hanged on Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> next. Do not grieve on my account. I am still quite cheerful. God bless you all.*



His speech was promptly printed as a broadside by C.C. Mead in Boston: ADDRESS OF JOHN BROWN ...



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SENTENCE OF DEATH; FOR HIS HEROIC ATTEMPT AT HARPERS FERRY...:



[Edwin Coppoc](#) was tried by a jury of his white male peers immediately after the sentence was handed down in the case of Captain [John Brown](#).



He was sentenced to be hanged. (His brother [Barclay Coppoc](#) was still eluding capture. From prison before his hanging, he would write to his adoptive mother, of a nonresistant-abolitionist [Quaker](#) farm family, that he was

*“sorry to say that I was ever induced to raise a gun.”*

He would be hung with [John E. Cook](#) on December 16, 1859. The body would be buried in Winona after a funeral attended by the entire town. Later the body would be reburied in Salem, Ohio.)

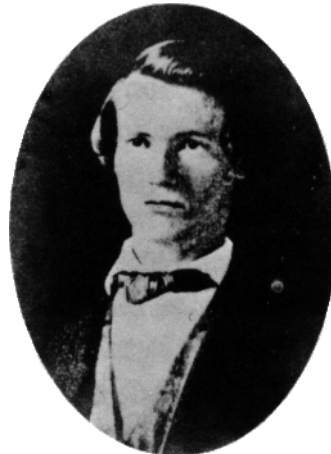
The weekly [Valley Spirit](#) contained a number of articles linking the [Harpers Ferry](#) raid with Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. One article described [John E. Cook](#) and [Albert Hazlett](#)'s capture, detailing the papers found on

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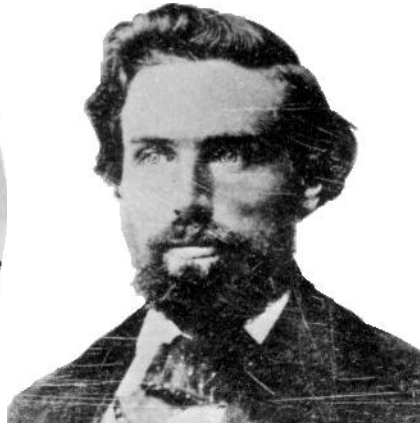
RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

Cook's person, while another reported on the transfer of the prisoners to Charlestown.



In "Capt. Kagi," the editors express doubt that [John Henry Kagi](#), a former Chambersburg resident, and [Charles Plummer Tidd](#) had actually been killed during the raid. Local fears were not assuaged by the discovery of rifles, ammunition, books and bandages in Beatty's Woods.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 2d]



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

November 3, Thursday: The letter of response from Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) of Virginia arrived with [Lydia Maria Child](#). All the blame for what had happened at [Harpers Ferry](#) was assignable to her and her fellow abolitionists. A few days later, a letter would arrive from [John Brown](#) himself, alerting Child to the possibility that if she or some notorious abolitionist like her were to arrive in Charlestown, and the general public become aware of this, he and everyone associated with him might simply be taken out of the jail and lynched in order to make certain that there would be no rescue.



[Henry Thoreau](#) delivered his lecture “A Plea for Captain John Brown” at Washburn Hall in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Off Nova Scotia on his voyage from England to the US, the Reverend [Samuel Joseph May](#) was made aware of the raid upon the Harpers Ferry arsenal.

Charles Ulrich of Hartford, Connecticut wrote to Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) of Virginia:



*Hartford, November 3 1859*

*Hon Henry A. Wise*

*Dear Sir*

*I hope you will excuse me for troubling you at a time when I presume you are very much engaged with more important matters than mine But I should be very much obliged to you if you would have the kindness to get for me "John Brown's" autograph*

*Yours most respectfully*

*Chas. Ulrich*

*Box 551*

*Hartford Conn.*

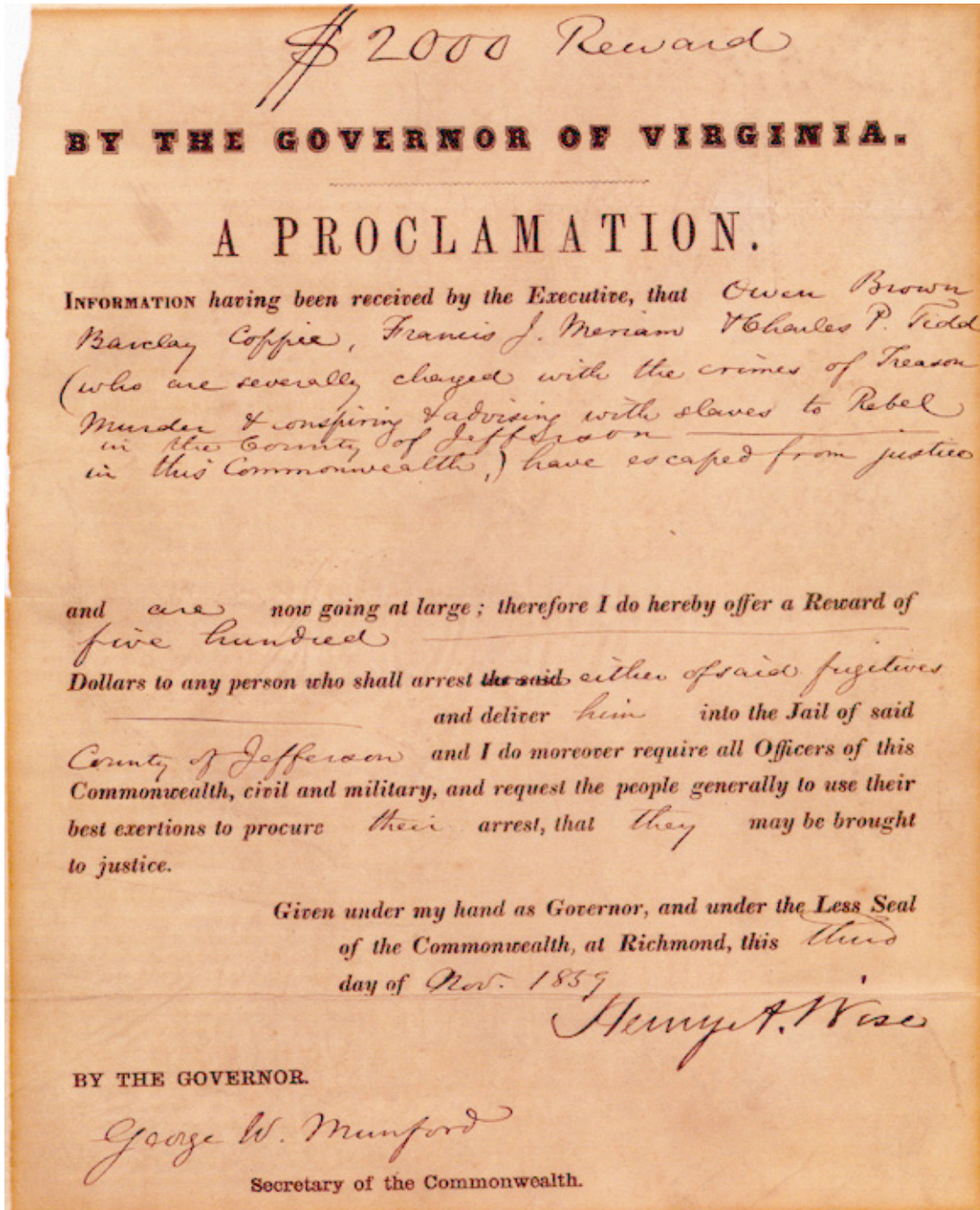
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**[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 3d]**

November 4, Friday: A report of [Henry Thoreau](#)'s "Fifth Fraternity Lecture," "Captain John Brown of Ossawattomie" (on November 1st), by CKW (Charles King Whipple), appeared in the Liberator:

**OSAWATOMIE**

Henry D. Thoreau of Concord ... took for his subject one in whom all mankind are now interested, "Captain John Brown of Ossawattomie." This exciting theme seemed to have awakened "the hermit of Concord" from his usual state of philosophic indifference, and he spoke with real enthusiasm for an hour and a half, giving much information respecting Captain Brown's earlier life, and bestowing hearty praise upon the enterprise at Harper's Ferry, and as hearty dispraise upon the apathy and reserve shown in regard to it by those portions of the periodical press which did not take the equally shameful ground of direct censure.

Mr. Thoreau took special pains to include the Liberator in the censure which he had at first bestowed upon the press generally. In doing this, he ignored the fact that Mr. Garrison has bestowed high and hearty eulogy upon Captain Brown, representing him as not only (judged from the ordinary stand-point of patriotism) superior in nobleness to the heroes of the American Revolution, but entitled to the higher praise of faithfully practicing towards the most oppressed people of our country the lessons of the Golden Rule; and, moreover, he distorted Mr. Garrison's first statement, (made on receipt of the first day's telegraphic reports,) that the attempt was apparently an insane one, into a charge that he had represented Captain Brown as insane.

A very large audience listened to this lecture, crowding the hall half an hour before the time of its commencement, and giving hearty applause to some of the most energetic expressions of the





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speaker.

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON



[Bronson Alcott](#) made an entry in his journal, that [Thoreau](#) had stopped by, and had told him about his lectures on [John Brown](#) in Worcester and in Boston.



**[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 4th]**

November 7, Monday: According to Caleb Calkins, [Gerrit Smith](#)'s clerk, Smith allowed himself to be coaxed by his friends into an insane asylum in Utica, New York on the supposition that they were taking him to join [Captain Brown](#) in Charles Town, Virginia to suffer hanging there with him. Smith's physician would supply a letter according to which the rich man of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy had become "quite deranged, intellectually as well as morally; and he is also feeble physically." The newspapers would loyally report that the local rich man's mind had become "considerably disordered" and that his present situation was "one of decided lunacy." Rich men don't hang, they are cared for; it is poor men, who cannot afford to be declared insane, who are allowed to dangle and swing and kick and strangle. (But you knew that, right?)

Mary Jennie Tappan wrote to [Henry Thoreau](#) in [Concord](#) from Bradford, New Hampshire, introducing herself by noting that "to me you are not so much a stranger as I to you," in order to thank him for his "brave and true" remarks about [John Brown](#). So who was Mary Jennie Tappan?

*Bradford, N.H. Nov. 7. '59*

*I wish to thank you for the utterance of those brave, true words in*



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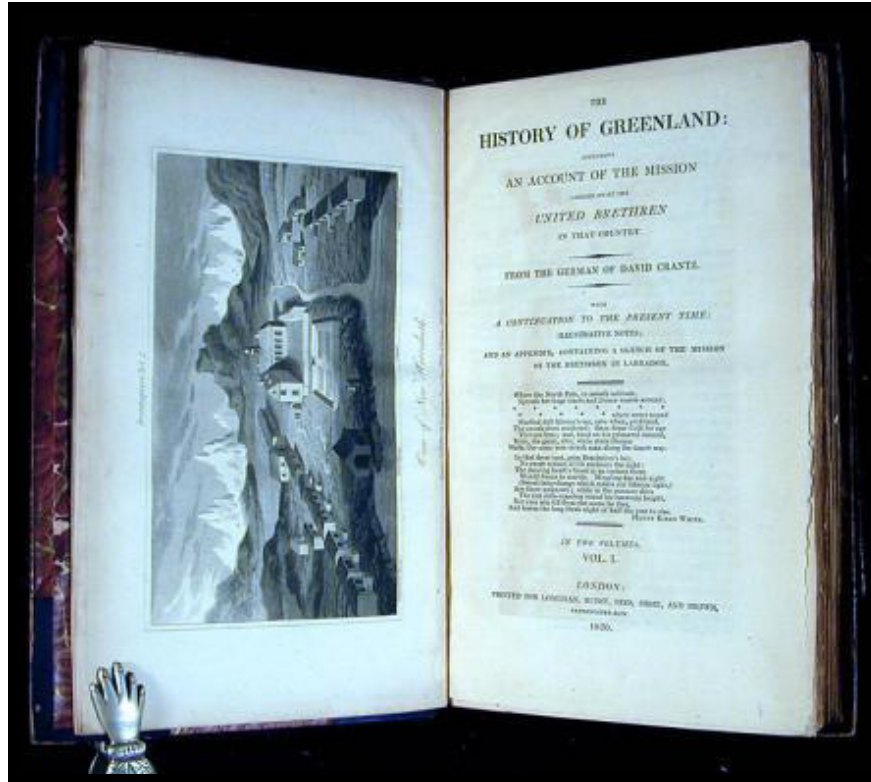
*[behalf] of the noble Saint and self-forgetting hero of Harpers Ferry; just the words I so longed to have some living voice speak, loud, so that the world might hear— In the quiet of my home among the hills I read them [tonight] and feel that my thought has found a glorified expression and I am satisfied, and through the distance I reach forth my hand to thank you —bless you— I hope you will not think this note, born of this moments impulse an unpardonable intrusion— I believe you will not—you are not so bound by conventionalisms—to me you are not so much a stranger as I to you.— God keep you!—  
Mary Jennie Tappan.*



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Thoreau checked out, from Harvard Library, the first two volumes of a translation from the High Dutch of Missionary Brother David Crantz's THE HISTORY OF GREENLAND; INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF THE MISSION CARRIED ON BY THE UNITED BRETHREN IN THAT COUNTRY (1820).



Was it on November 7, 1850 or November 7, 1860 that Thoreau checked out Thomas Jefferson's NOTES ON THE STATE OF VIRGINIA. WITH AN APPENDIX (8th American edition; Boston: Printed by David Carlisle, for Thomas & Andrews, J. West, West & Greenleaf, J. White & Co., E. & S. Larkin, J. Nancrede, Manning & Loring, Boston, Thomas & Thomas, Walpole, N.H., and B.B. Macanulty, Salem. 1801)? — a volume in which, incidentally, the author had had a few things to say about the town and geography of Harpers Ferry, Virginia.

### THOMAS JEFFERSON'S NOTES

Bronson Alcott wrote to Friend Daniel Ricketson.<sup>82</sup>

*Thoreau has just come back from reading to Parker's company a revolutionary Lecture on Osawatomie [John] Brown, a hero and martyr after his own heart and style of manliness. It was received here by our Concord folks with great favor, and by the Worcester friends of his. I wish the towns might be his auditors throughout the length and breadth of states and country. He*

82. Anna Ricketson and Walton Ricketson, editors, DANIEL RICKETSON: AUTOBIOGRAPHIC AND MISCELLANEOUS (New Bedford MA: Anthony, 1910, pages 130-1)



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*thinks of printing it in pamphlet and spreading it far and wide,  
North and South.*

Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) sent a telegram to Andrew Hunter, his special prosecutor of the case against [Captain Brown](#) and his co-conspirators at Charles Town, urging he bring indictments also against former New York congressman [Gerrit Smith](#) and against famous black newspaperman [Frederick Douglass](#). He assured Hunter confidentially that as governor he would “not reprieve or pardon one man” of those whom Hunter managed to convict.



### [THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 7th]

November 8, Tuesday: Alyeksandr Borodin left St. Petersburg to travel abroad as a delegate of the Academy of Physicians and gain experience for the position that had recently been offered to him, of Adjunct-Professor of Chemistry.

In the evening in Boston, [Waldo Emerson](#) his lecture “Courage” before a large crowd at the Music Hall in Boston, averring that [John Brown](#) was

*that new saint than whom none purer or more brave was  
ever led by love of men into conflict and death, -the  
new saint awaiting his martyrdom, and who, if he shall  
suffer, will make the [gallows](#) glorious like the cross.*

(But when he would publish this lecture as an essay, he would reconsider and remove this remark.)

The Springfield, Massachusetts [Republican](#) editorialized, punning on the [Thoreau](#) family name and its usual pronunciation, that “This Thoreau seems to be a thorough fanatic — why don’t [*sic*] he imitate Brown and do good by rushing to the gallows?”


[Louisa May Alcott](#) wrote to [Alfred Whitman](#) that she was “full of admiration for old Brown’s courage and pity for his probable end.” She reported that Concord folks were “boiling over with excitement” because “many of our people (anti-slavery I mean) are concerned in it. We have a daily stampede for papers, and a nightly indignation meeting over the wickedness of our country, and the cowardice of the human race. I’m afraid mother will die of spontaneous combustion if things are not set right soon.”



November 8: A pleasant day.

P. M.—To Nut Meadow and Fair Haven Hill.

I hear a small z-ing cricket.

[Coombs](#) says that quite a little flock of pigeons [[Passenger Pigeon](#)  [Ectopistes migratorius](#)] bred here last summer. He found one nest in a small white pine near his pigeon-stand (where he baited them in the summer), so low he could put his hand in it (!?). I saw, while talking with him, a trout playing about in the open roadside watering-place, on the Jimmy Miles road (i.e. in Nut Meadow Brook), which was apparently fifteen inches long; not lurking under the bank but openly swimming up and down in midstream.

How richly and exuberantly downy are many goldenrod and aster heads now, their seed just on the point of



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falling or being blown away, before they are in the least weather-beaten! They are now puffed up to their utmost, clean and light. [Vide back, October 16th.]

The tufts of purplish withered andropogon in Witherell Glade are still as fair as ever, soft and trembling and bending from the wind; of a very light mouse-color seen from the side of the sun, and as delicate as the most fragile ornaments of a lady's bonnet; but looking toward the sun they are a brilliant white, each polished hair (of the pappus?) reflecting the November sun without its heats, not in the least yellowish or brown like the goldenrods and asters.

November 9, Wednesday: *Vor hundert Jahren*, a melodrama for speaker and orchestra by Franz Liszt to words of Halm, was performed for the initial time, in Weimar.

The weekly Valley Spirit disputed allegations that [John E. Cook](#) had been mistreated while in prison.



The New-York Daily Tribune reported [Henry Thoreau](#)'s lecture at the Boston Music Hall:

There were some just and striking remarks in it, and many foolish and ill-natured ones. Sneers at the Republicans were quite frequent.

**REPUBLICAN PARTY**

[Bronson Alcott](#) noted in his journal that [Henry Thoreau](#) again had visited him for conversation, and that among their topics of conversation had been Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) of Virginia, and [John Brown](#), and the possibility of obtaining a reprieve for Brown from Wise. (It seems rather unlikely, however, that Bronson's take on it is accurate here, and that Thoreau was seriously considering the possibility of saving Brown — as in a number of contexts Thoreau states most clearly elsewhere that he considered that Brown's highest and best purpose was to hang, and that no attempt whatever should be made to save him from this destiny.)

He thinks someone from the North should see Gov. Wise, or write concerning Capt. Brown's character and motives, to influence the Governor in his favor. Thoreau is the man to write, or Emerson; but there seems little or no hope of pleas for mercy. Slavery must have its way, and Wise must do its bidding on peril of his own safety with the rest.



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November 9. A fine Indian-summer day. Have had pleasant weather about a week.  
[Vide November 1st.]

November 10, Thursday: At a meeting in Zürich, 3 bilateral treaties were signed by Switzerland, France, Austria, and Sardinia, ending hostilities and formalizing their agreement at Villafranca by which Lombardy was to pass to Sardinia.

*Wohl bist du uns geboren, gestorben bist du nicht* for solo voices, chorus and orchestra by Giacomo Meyerbeer to words of Pfau was performed for the initial time, in Paris, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Friedrich Schiller. 4,000 people attend the festival in the *Cirque des Champs-Élysées*. Also premiered was a *Festmarsch* composed by Meyerbeer for the occasion (the march was better received than the cantata).

Edwin I? Mulock wrote from Dover, New Hampshire to Charles Wesley Slack explaining that although he was willing to speak, because of forthcoming articles on [John Brown](#) in the Liberator he would be unable to do so.



November 10. Rain; warm.

November 11, Friday: [Waldo Emerson](#) wrote from Concord to Charles Wesley Slack, providing the title of his forthcoming lecture.

The Reverend [Octavius Brooks Frothingham](#) wrote from New-York, declining to preach in Boston because it was proving almost impossible to fill his pulpit at home.



November 11: Windy and cooler.

I observed, October 23d, wood turtles copulating in the Assabet, and a flock of goldfinches on the top of a hemlock,—as if after its seeds?

Also, October 24th, riding home from Acton,<sup>83</sup> I saw the withered leaves blown from an oak by the roadside dashing off, gyrating, and surging upward into the air, so exactly like a flock of birds sporting with one another that, for a minute at least, I could not be sure they were not birds; and it suggested how far the motions of birds, like those of these leaves, might be determined by currents of air, i. e., how far the bird learns to conform to such currents.

The fiat variety of *Lycopodium dendroideum* shed pollen on the 25th of October. That's a lycopodium path on north side of Colburn Hill.

**Thoreau as  
Ornithologist**

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83. [Refer to events of October 24th, above   ]



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November 11, Friday: Using her middle name “Margaret,” the wife of Senator [James Murray Mason](#) sent an flaming letter of reproach to [Lydia Maria Child](#):



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Alto, King George's Co., Va., Nov. 11th, 1859.

Do you read your Bible, Mrs. Child? If you do, read there, "Woe unto you, hypocrites," and take to yourself with two-fold damnation that terrible sentence; for, rest assured, in the day of judgment it shall be more tolerable for those thus scathed by the awful denunciation of the Son of God, than for you. You would soothe with sisterly and motherly care the hoary-headed murderer of [Harpers Ferry](#)! A man whose aim and intention was to incite the horrors of a servile war — to condemn women of your own race, ere death closed their eyes on their sufferings from violence and outrage, to see their husbands and fathers murdered, their children butchered, the ground strewn with the brains of their babes. The antecedents of [Brown](#)'s band proved them to have been the offscourings of the earth; and what would have been our fate had they found as many sympathizers in Virginia as they seem to have in Massachusetts?

Now, compare yourself with those your "sympathy" would devote to such ruthless ruin, and say, on that "word of honor, which never has been broken," would you stand by the bedside of an old negro, dying of a hopeless disease, to alleviate his sufferings as far as human aid could? Have you ever watched the last, lingering illness of a consumptive, to soothe, as far as in you lay, the inevitable fate? Do you soften the pangs of maternity in those around you by all the care and comfort you can give? Do you grieve with those near you, even though the sorrows resulted from their own misconduct? Did you ever sit up until the "wee hours" to complete a dress for a motherless child, that she might appear on Christmas day in a new one, along with her more fortunate companions? We do these and more for our servants, and why? Because we endeavor to do our duty in that state of life it has pleased God to place us. In his revealed word we read our duties to them — theirs to us are there also — "Not only to the good and gentle, but to the forward." — (Peter 2: 18.) Go thou and do likewise, and keep away from Charlestown. If the stories read in the public prints be true, of the sufferings of the poor of the North, you need not go far for objects of charity. "Thou hypocrite! take first the beam out of thine own eye, then shalt thou see clearly to pull the mote out of thy neighbor's." But if, indeed, you do lack objects of sympathy near you, go to Jefferson county, to the family of George Turner, a noble, true-hearted man, whose devotion to his friend (Col. Washington) causing him to risk his life, was shot down like a dog. Or to that of old Beckham, whose grief at the murder of his negro subordinate made him needlessly expose himself to the aim of the assassin Brown. And when you can equal in deeds of love and charity to those around you, what is shown by nine-tenths of the Virginia plantations, then by your "sympathy" whet the knives for our throats, and kindle the torch that fires our homes.

You reverence Brown for his clemency to his prisoners! Prisoners! and how taken? Unsuspecting workmen, going to their daily duties; unarmed gentlemen, taken from their beds at the dead hour of the night, by six men doubly and trebly armed. Suppose he had hurt a hair of their heads, do you suppose one of the band of desperadoes would have left the engine-house alive? And did he not know that his treatment of them was only hope of life then, or of clemency afterward? Of course he did. The United States troops could not have prevented him from being torn limb from limb.

I will add, in conclusion, no Southerner ought, after your letter to Governor Wise and to Brown, to read a line of your composition, or to touch a magazine which bears your name in its lists of contributors; and in this we hope for the "sympathy," at least of those at the North who deserve the name of woman.

*M.J.C. MASON.*



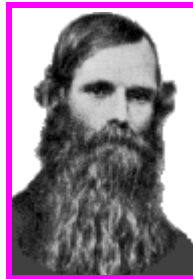


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November 13, Sunday: By crossing the frontier at Taurogen, Alyeksandr Borodin left Russia for the 1st time.

[George Luther Stearns](#) and [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy were advised that their Boston attorney John Andrew had reversed his previous opinion that the [Secret "Six"](#) were in no jeopardy of legal action.



**[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 13th]**

November 14, Monday: The New-York [Times](#) reported that on account of the flight of the original proprietor, "Fred. Douglass' Paper in New Hands," to wit, the hands of son Lawrs. H. Douglass.

[Lysander Spooner](#) had been scheming about how the abolitionists might force the release of [John Brown](#), through the kidnapping and holding for ransom of Governor [Henry Alexander Wise](#) of Virginia. He schemed that they might approach from the sea, by way of Chesapeake Bay and then the James River. From the poorly controlled region near the James, the group could sneak into the state capital, Richmond, and overcome the governor some evening while he was out for a walk; once out to sea. They could then retrace their route, to safety at sea. On this day he called on John LeBarnes to discussed this scheme.

Although [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy was believed to be hard at work on a plan to rescue [John Brown](#) from his Virginia prison, a letter to his co-conspirator, the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), in exile in Rome, indicates otherwise: "The feeling of sympathy with Brown is spreading fast over all the North, and will grow stronger if he is hanged.... The [failure](#) is a success; it has done more for Freedom than years of talk could.... It grieves me sadly to think that Brown must die, but he is ready for it; and if we cannot avert it, we must think it best. It will undoubtedly add millions to the righteous side." Someone writing in this manner while otherwise purporting to be taking action to save a life, very clearly, is sponsoring a delusion, and is doing so not in order to save that life himself but in order to ensure that no-one else has a chance to originate an effort to save that life. Sanborn was pretending, quite cold-bloodedly, in order to ensure that no last-minute event would cheat the conspirators of Brown's hanging and martyrdom. In my own personal opinion, in addition, it would have occurred to Sanborn that dead men are no longer capable of telling tales, and that it



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was not altogether a bad thing that while Captain Brown's lips were still sealed by his agenda of silent martyrdom they were going to become forever sealed by the glue of death.

At some point [Richard Josiah Hinton](#) had come to [Luke Fisher Parsons](#) at the mill where he was working in Osawatomie, Kansas to persuade him to take part in a scheme in which James Montgomery would lead a party that would free the [Harpers Ferry](#) prisoners from the jail at Charlestown, Virginia. Parsons enlisted in this scheme and was given \$15 and told to join up with James Montgomery in [Leavenworth, Kansas](#). However, when he arrived in Leavenworth he could find no trace of Montgomery, and so he went to Lawrence, where he learned that since 18 inches of snow had fallen in the Charlestown, Virginia region, the rescue attempt had been called off.



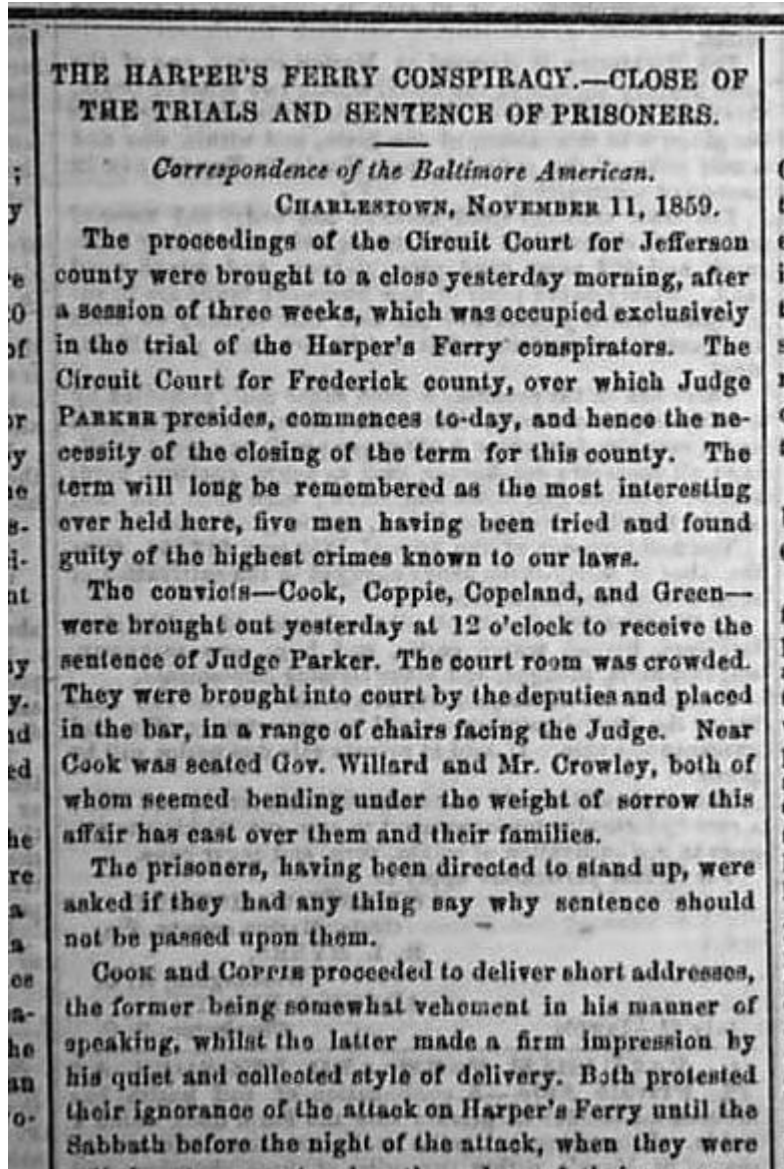
**[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 14th]**

Middle of November: The fugitive [Francis Jackson Meriam](#) showed up at the door of the conspiratorial [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy in exile at the St. Lawrence Hotel in Montréal, and was in need of succor. Howe "declined talking to" this wanted man and gave him nothing, since he was in a "wild state ... a state of painful excitement" — and changed hotels as soon as his victim was out of sight. Meriam would seek aid from [George Luther Stearns](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy in Montréal as well and would likewise strike out with this other conspirator. Sorry, guy, this isn't about you, we've used you up and thrown you away. Lots of luck out there in Christendom, hear?

[Lysander Spooner](#) had been scheming about how the abolitionists might force the release of [John Brown](#), through the kidnapping and holding for ransom of Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) of Virginia. He schemed that they might approach from the sea, by way of Chesapeake Bay and then the James River. From the poorly controlled region near the James, the group could sneak into the state capital, Richmond, and overcome the governor some evening while he was out for a walk; once out to sea. They could then retrace their route, to safety at sea. On this day, in a letter to the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#), John LeBarnes wrote about the visit he had received on the previous day from one "L.S.", commenting that "His idea has certainly the merit of audacity."

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November 15, Tuesday-December 9: Newspapers were reporting on the sentencing phase of the treason trials taking place in Charlestown, Virginia:



**THE HARPER'S FERRY CONSPIRACY.—CLOSE OF THE TRIALS AND SENTENCE OF PRISONERS.**

*Correspondence of the Baltimore American.*

CHARLESTOWN, NOVEMBER 11, 1859.

The proceedings of the Circuit Court for Jefferson county were brought to a close yesterday morning, after a session of three weeks, which was occupied exclusively in the trial of the Harper's Ferry conspirators. The Circuit Court for Frederick county, over which Judge PARKER presides, commences to-day, and hence the necessity of the closing of the term for this county. The term will long be remembered as the most interesting ever held here, five men having been tried and found guilty of the highest crimes known to our laws.

The convicts—Cook, Coppie, Copeland, and Green—were brought out yesterday at 12 o'clock to receive the sentence of Judge Parker. The court room was crowded. They were brought into court by the deputies and placed in the bar, in a range of chairs facing the Judge. Near Cook was seated Gov. Willard and Mr. Crowley, both of whom seemed bending under the weight of sorrow this affair has cast over them and their families.

The prisoners, having been directed to stand up, were asked if they had any thing say why sentence should not be passed upon them.

Cook and Corrin proceeded to deliver short addresses, the former being somewhat vehement in his manner of speaking, whilst the latter made a firm impression by his quiet and collected style of delivery. Both protested their ignorance of the attack on Harper's Ferry until the Sabbath before the night of the attack, when they were

John LeBarnes wrote Thomas Wentworth Higginson that "[L\[ysander\] S\[pooner\]](#) called upon me yesterday. His idea has certainly the merit of audacity." Although Higginson and LeBarnes were able to turn up a boat and a willing crew of mercenaries, they would be utterly unable to obtain donations stalled their plans. For most of the usual suspects, clearly, John Brown would function better in the role of dead martyr than as a continuing loose cannon (certainly, that was the attitude of [Henry Thoreau](#)).

[Luke Fisher Parsons](#) continued in his diary:

November 15, [1859](#): Read about Harper's Ferry. Read of



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proceedings of convention held May 8, 1858 in Chatam, Canada in which my name was mentioned several times.

November 16, [1859](#): Heard that John E. Cook had made a confession, implicating several, but was sentenced to be hung on the sixteenth of December. Greene and Copeland are also to be hung.

November 25, [1859](#): Went over to widow Martin's to see a free "niger" and to try to find who the six men are that have been hunting him. Could not find them.

November 29, [1859](#): Got a letter, in mourning, from Lizzie Leeman, telling of the death of her brother who was shot at Harper's Ferry.

December 2, [1859](#): This is the day that John Brown is to be hanged. He died a friend of freedom.

December 8, [1859](#): I went and gave three "niger catchers hell." I started for Lawrence about three in the morning with a negro slave.

December 9, [1859](#): Arrived at seven in Lawrence. Sent slave to Rev. Stewart's, who was on underground railway by which the slaves escaped to Canada. Slave traded off his horse for pony and revolver.

December 10, [1859](#): Now at W.A. Phillip's house. Talked over old affairs and of Salina and Harper's Ferry.

December 11, [1859](#): Left Lawrence on 11th of December Am now at Ottawa Jones' (Now Ottawa, Kansas named after this half-breed Indian).

[Henry Thoreau](#) composed the substance of his remarks that would be read on July 4, 1860 at the "anniversary celebration" in [John Brown](#)'s family's home town, [North Elba, New York](#) (material he composed in this period would be altered only slightly).

### Ross/Adams commentary

THE LAST DAYS OF JOHN BROWN: Commonly, men live according to a formula, and are satisfied if the order of law is observed, but in this instance they, to some extent, returned to original perceptions, and there was a slight revival of old religion....(REFORM PAPERS 147) They remembered the old formula, but did not hear the new revelation.... How can a man behold the light, who has no answering inward light? They are true to their **right**, but when they look this way they **see** nothing, they are blind. For the children of the light to contend with them is as if there should be a contest between eagles and owls....(148)

It is not every man who can be a Christian, even in a very moderate sense, whatever education you give him. It is a matter of constitution and temperament, after all. He may have to be born again many times. I have known many a man who pretended to be a Christian, in whom it was ridiculous, for he had no genius for it. It is not every man who can be a freeman, even.... They seem to have known nothing about living or dying for a principle....(148-9)

We soon saw, as he saw, that he was not to be pardoned or rescued by man. That would have been to disarm him, to restore to him a material weapon, a Sharpe's rifle, when he had taken up the sword of the spirit, — the sword with which he has really won his greatest and most memorable victories.... He works in public, and in

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the clearest light that shines on this land.(153)

*Jerusalem's idolatries.*

EZEKIEL, VIII.

*Her sore punishment.*

strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall pollute it.

22 My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute my secret place: for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it.

23 ¶ Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence.

24 Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be defiled.

25 Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none.

26 Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients.

27 The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

CHAPTER VIII.

*The idolatries in Jerusalem.*

AND it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell there upon me.

2 Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber.

hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.

12 Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.

13 ¶ He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do.

14 Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.

15 ¶ Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.

16 And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.

17 ¶ Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose.

18 Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.

## John Brown marked up this Bible in prison to show the righteousness of returning evil for evil



November 15. A very pleasant Indian-summer day.

P. M.—To Ledum Swamp.

I look up the river from the railroad bridge. It is perfectly smooth between the uniformly tawny meadows, and I see several musquash-cabins off Hubbard Shore distinctly outlined as usual in the November light.

I hear in several places a faint cricket note, either a fine z-ing or a distincter creak, also see and hear a grasshopper's crackling flight.

The clouds were never more fairly reflected in the water than now, as I look up the Cyanean Reach from Clamshell.

A fine gossamer is streaming from every fence and tree and stubble, though a careless observer would not notice it. As I look along over the grass toward the sun at Hosmer's field, beyond Lupine Hill, I notice the shimmering effect of the gossamer, — which seems to cover it almost like a web, — occasioned by its motion, though the air is so still. This is noticed at least forty rods off.

I turn down Witherell Glade, only that I may bring its tufts of andropogon between me and the sun for a moment. They are pretty as ever. [Vide Oct. 16th and November 8th.]

In the midst of Ledum Swamp I came upon a white cat under the spruces and the water brush, which evidently had not seen me till I was within ten feet. There she stood, quite still, as if hoping to be concealed, only turning her head slowly away from and toward me, looking at me thus two or three times with an extremely worried expression in her eyes, but not moving any other part of her body. It occurred to me from her peculiar anxious expression and this motion, as if spellbound, that perhaps she was deaf; but when I moved toward her she found the use of her limbs and dashed off, bounding over the andromeda by successive leaps like a rabbit, no longer making her way through or beneath it.

I noticed on the 3d, in Worcester, that the white pines had been as full of seed there as here this year. Also

CAT



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gathered half a pocketful of shagbarks, of which many still hung on the trees though most had fallen. All through the excitement occasioned by Brown's remarkable attempt and subsequent behavior, the Massachusetts Legislature, not taking any steps for the defense of her citizens who are likely to be carried to Virginia as witnesses and exposed to the violence of a slaveholding mob, is absorbed in a liquor-agency question. That has, in fact, been the all-absorbing question with it!! I am sure that no person up to the occasion, or who perceived the significance of the former event, could at present attend to this question at all. As for the Legislature, bad spirits occupied their thoughts. If any person, in a lecture or a conversation, should now cite any ancient example of heroism, such as Cato, or Tell, or Winkelried, passing over the recent deeds and words of John Brown, I am sure that it would be felt by any intelligent audience of Northern men to be tame and inexcusably far-fetched. I do not know of such words, uttered under such circumstances, in Roman, or English, or any, history. It is a fact proving how universal and widely related any transcendent greatness is, like the apex of a pyramid to all beneath it, that when I now look over my extracts of the noblest poetry the best is oftenest applicable in part or wholly to this man's position. Almost any noble verse may be read either as his elegy or eulogy or be made the text of an oration on him. Indeed, such are now first discerned to be the parts of a divinely established liturgy, applicable to those rare cases for which the ritual of no church has provided, – the case of heroes, martyrs, and saints. This is the formula established on high, their burial service, to which every great genius has contributed its line or syllable. Of course the ritual of no church which is wedded to the state can contain a service applicable to the case of a state criminal unjustly condemned, – a martyr. The sense of grand poetry read by the light of this event is brought out distinctly like an invisible writing held to the fire. About the 23d of October I saw a large flock of goldfinches [Vide November 11th.] (judging from their motions and notes) on the tops of the hemlocks up the Assabet, apparently feeding on their seeds, then falling. They were collected in great numbers on the very tops of these trees and flitting from one to another. Rice has since described to me the same phenomenon as observed by him there since (says he saw the birds picking out the seeds), though he did not know what birds they were. William Rice says that these birds get so much of the lettuce seed that you can hardly save any. They get sunflower seeds also. Are called "lettuce-birds" in the books. A lady who was suitably indignant at the outrage on Senator Sumner, lamenting to me to-day the very common insensibility to such things, said that one woman to whom she described the deed and on whom she thought that she had made some impression, lately inquired of her with feeble curiosity: "How is that young man who had his head hurt? I haven't heard anything about him for a good while." As I returned over the Corner Bridge I saw cows in the sun half-way down Fair Haven Hill next the Cliff, half a mile off, the declining sun so warmly reflected from their red coats that I could not for some time tell if they were not some still bright-red shrub oaks, – for they had no more form at that distance.

Charles Dickens completed the serialization of A TALE OF TWO CITIES in his magazine All the Year Round.

November 18, Friday: [Waldo Emerson](#) spoke at a meeting to raise money to pay for the expenses of defending Captain [John Brown](#) and the other participants in the Harpers Ferry raid, held in the Tremont Temple in Boston and presided over by [John Albion Andrew](#).

[Henry Thoreau](#) made an entry in his journal in regard to [Brown](#):



November 18. A fog this morning and yesterday morning, lasting till about 10 A.M. I looked into the Church of England liturgy, printed near the beginning of the last century, to find a service applicable to the case of [Captain Brown](#). The only martyr recognized and provided for by it was King Charles the First!! Of all the inhabitants of England and of the world, he was the only one whom that church made a martyr and saint of!! And now for more than half a century it had celebrated his martyrdom by an annual service! What a satire on the church is that! An apothecary in New Bedford told R. [RICKETSON WAS IN CONCORD FROM NOV. 19TH TO 24TH. HE WALKED AND SUPPED WITH THOREAU ON THE 20TH AND WENT TO VISIT HIM THE NEXT DAY.]

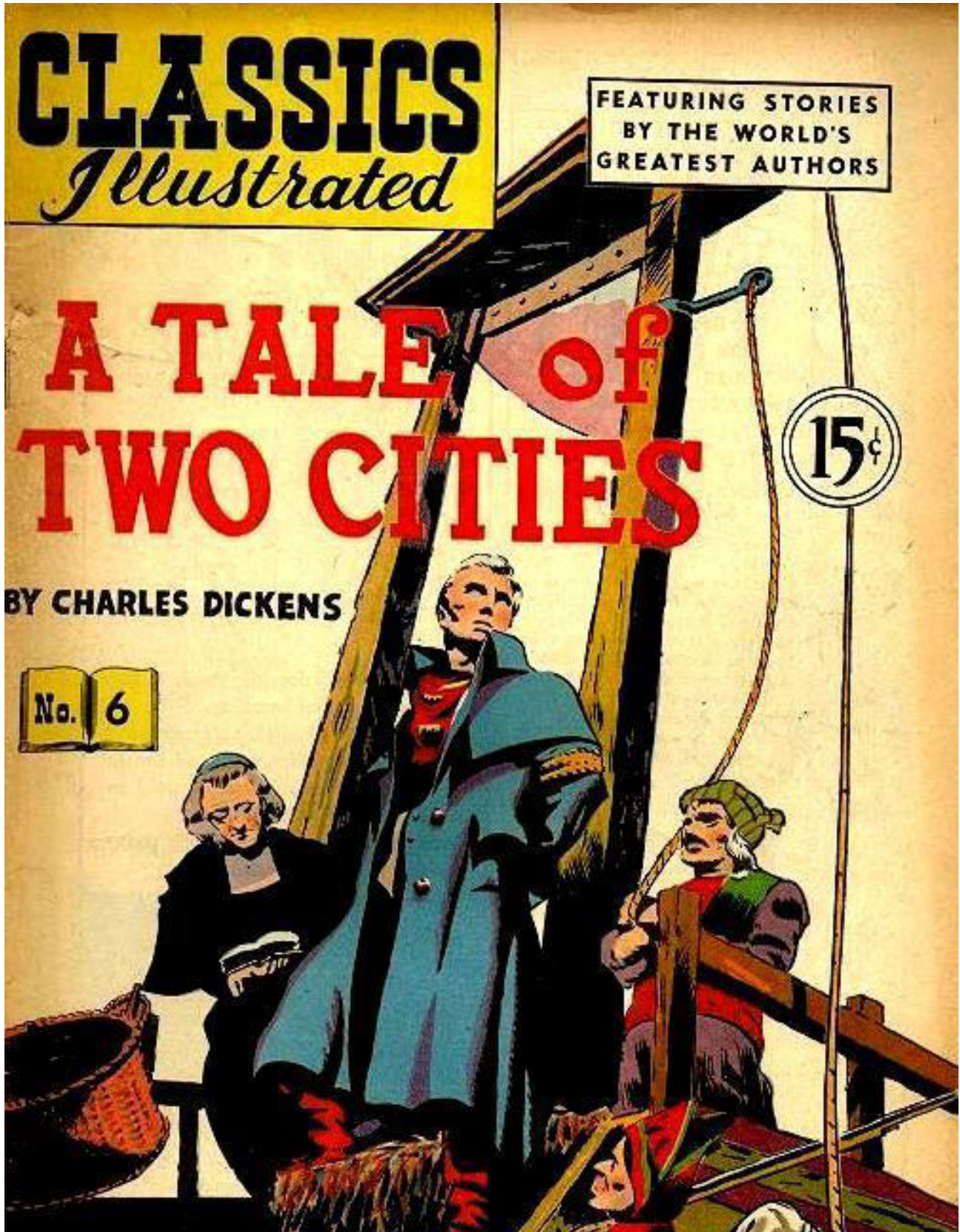
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the other day that a man (a Mr. Leonard) of Springfield told him that he once attended a meeting in Springfield where a woman was exhibited as in a mesmeric state, insensible to pain,—a large and fleshy woman,—and the spectators were invited to test her condition with pins or otherwise. After some had tried, one among them came forward with a vial of cowage, and, after stating to the company that it would produce intolerable irritation in the skin, he proceeded to rub a little on the woman's bare arm and on her neck. She immediately winced under it, whereupon he took out another vial containing sweet oil, and, applying a little of that, relieved her. He then stated that any one present might apply to his skin as much as he pleased. Some came forward and he laid bare his breast and when they applied it sparingly and hesitatingly, he said, "Rub away, gentlemen,—as much as you like," and he betrayed no sign of irritation. That man was [John Brown](#).



**[THOREAU WOULD MAKE NO ENTRIES IN HIS JOURNAL  
FOR NOVEMBER 19th-21st]**



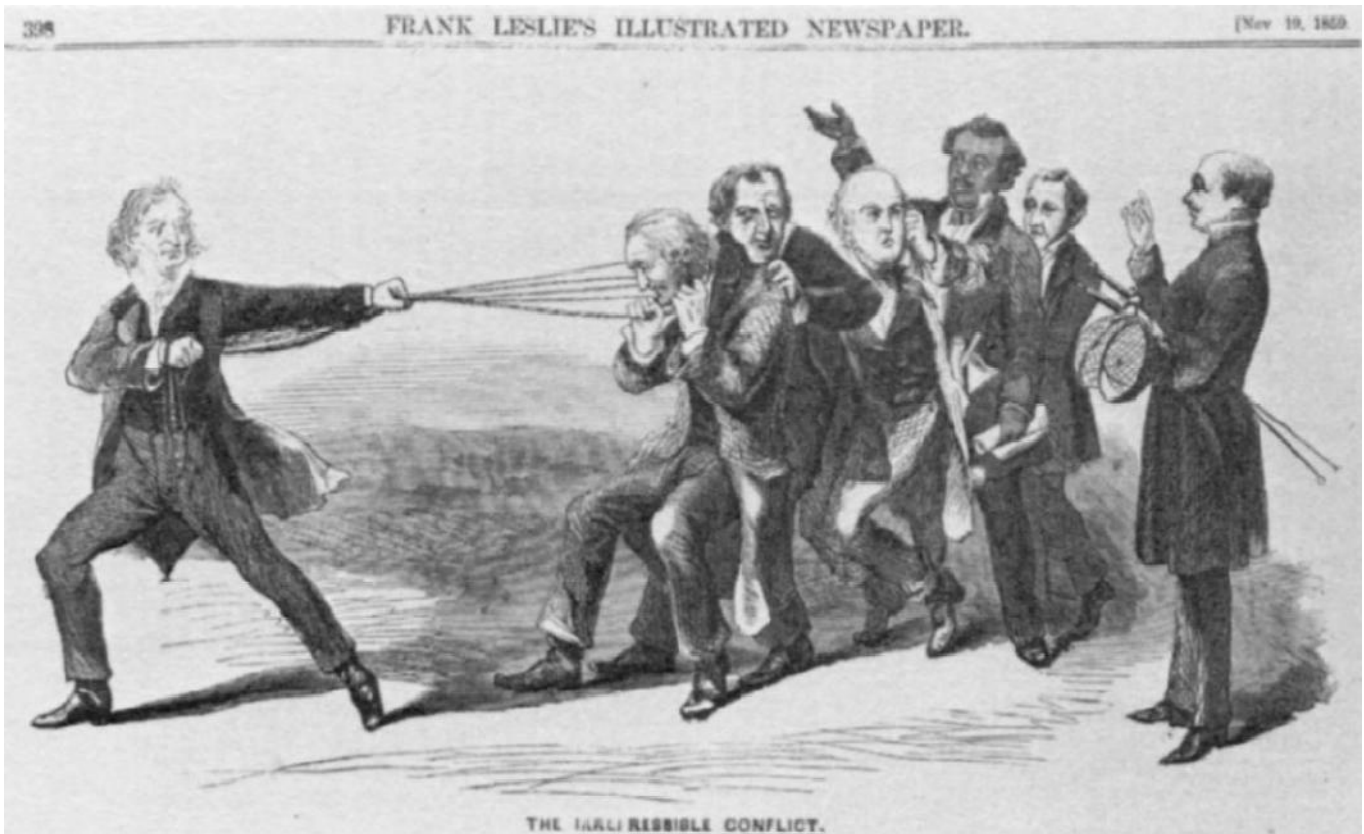
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November 19, Saturday: *Geneviève de Brabant*, an *opéra-bouffon* by Jacques Offenbach to words of Jaime and Tréfeu, was performed for the initial time, at the *Bouffes-Parisiens* in Paris.

Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) of Virginia had been attempting to capture [Frederick Douglass](#), in order to try him for treason alongside [John Brown](#):



George Hughes Hopworth (1833-1902) wrote to Charles Wesley Slack declining to the part in a meeting concerning [John Brown](#).

[Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) in Cincinnati, asking for contributions to the new Cincinnati incarnation of [THE DIAL](#). (He would never receive any.)

Cin. Novr. 19, 1859.

My dear Mr. Thoreau,

I trust that you also, With Emerson, will be moved by old and high memories to help us in starting out here a new incarnation of the old Dial. It certainly will prove worthy to be so called if we can obtain help from R.W.E. yourself and others. We will not be able at once to pay contributors, and the Editor expects to lose; but in due time we shall



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reap if we faint not. Will you not give the babe a birth-present? One of those fresh wood-zephyrs that fan our fevered hearts and bring health to blase cheeks! You are the man, the only man, who can make green grass and flowers grow upon the pages of our Dial.

What is my chief wish of you? It is to have you interested in us: willing to send us a love-gift of thought: noting, now and then on paper, the form and [?] of some pearls, which I know you are constantly finding in that Oriental Sea of yours upstairs. So now Mr. Pearl-Diver, I await your word of cheer! May I say that I shall be assisted by H. D. Thoreau of Concord? Pray let me hear at once.

Your friend,  
M.D. Conway.

At the invitation of [Bronson Alcott](#), [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) came to Concord to visit with him and with Thoreau:



*Left home for Concord at 10 1/2 A.M., arrived at Concord at 5 1/2 P.M., leaving the cars at Concord depot, walked down to the village bookstore (Mr. Stacey's) where I found Mr. Alcott, by whose invitation I was going to visit him; also saw Thoreau at the post-office. Received with much kindness by Mrs. Alcott and her two daughters, Louisa and Abby. Spent the evening with Mr. A. in his library, where he had a wood fire on the hearth. Their place is very retired, the house an old farmhouse which Mr. A. has fitted up at little expense in a very tasteful manner, and made it a suitable home for a philosopher and poet.*

ABBA ALCOTT

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

ABBY MAY ALCOTT

[Bronson Alcott](#) wrote in his journal that [Friend Daniel](#) and [Thoreau](#) had had supper and conversation at his house:

Ricketson from New Bedford arrives. He and Thoreau take supper with us. Thoreau talks truly and enthusiastically about Brown, denouncing the Union, President, the States, and Virginia particularly. Wishes to publish his last speech, and has been to Boston publishers, but fails to find any to print it for him.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 19th]



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November 20, Sunday: *Reiseabenteuer* op.227, a waltz by Johann Strauss, was performed for the first time, in the Volksgarten of Vienna.



**[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 20th]**

November 21, Monday: The USS *Constellation* took up station on its anti-slavery patrol off the mouth of the Congo River.

[Friend Daniel Ricketson](#)'s journal:



**BRONSON ALCOTT**

*Clear and milder. Walked this forenoon with Mr. Alcott beyond the old parsonage of Dr. Ripley, looking at farms, Mr. Alcott being desirous for me to come to Concord with my family to live. Left Mr. A.'s hospitable roof after dinner to visit my friend Thoreau. Mr. A. and his family are vegetarians, and live very simply on homely but wholesome fare, and enjoy good health. My visit was a very pleasant one, giving me the feeling of much ease and comfort. Called on Mr. Emerson with Mr. A. this A.M.*

**WALDO EMERSON**

Edwin Miller Wheelock (1829-1901) wrote from Dover, New Hampshire to Charles Wesley Slack to arrange a meeting at which they would select hymns; he will preach a sermon on [John Brown](#).



**[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 21st]**

November 24, Thursday: The firm of John Murray published the initial 500 copies of THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES BY MEANS OF NATURAL SELECTION by Charles Darwin, in London.

[La Gloire](#), the first ironclad battleship, was launched for the French navy at the arsenal of Mourillon, Toulon (this vessel had been designed by Stanislas Dupuy de Lôme).

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to Calvin H. Greene.

*Concord Nov. 24. '59*

*Dear Sir,*

*The lectures which you refer to were reported in the newspaper, after a fashion, the last one in some half dozen of them, and if I possessed one, or all, of those reports I would send them to you, bad as they are. The best, or at least longest one of the Brown Lecture was in the Boston "Atlas & Bee" of Nov 2<sup>d</sup>. May be half the whole—*



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*There were others in the Traveller— The Journal &c of the same date.*

*I am glad to know that you are interested to see my things, & I wish that I had them in a printed form to send to you. I exerted myself considerably to get the last discourse printed & sold for the benefit of Brown's family—but the publishers are afraid of pamphlets & it is now too late.*

*I return the stamp which I have not used.*

*I shall be glad to see you if I ever come your way*

[One-third page missing]

*Yrs truly  
Henry D. Thoreau*

**JOHN BROWN**

ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES BY MEANS OF NATURAL SELECTION, OR THE PRESERVATION OF FAVORED SPECIES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE was published to acclaim and controversy by a gentleman naturalist with whose work Thoreau was already familiar. Have you ever wondered how [Charles Darwin](#) ever got his ORIGIN book, with its so utterly novel and abhorrent thesis, through the London presses? The standard accounts merely say that he sent off his MS and it was published.



**ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES**

But what actually happened was that Charles Lyell fronted for him with a publisher, John Murray, and based on this recommendation Murray, being himself an amateur geologist, accepted the MS sight unseen. Once he got his hands on the actual manuscript, he became quite disenchanted at what he had committed himself to. He commented, in fact, that this new theory of descent with modification was like “contemplating the fruitful union of a poker and a rabbit.” The new theory was “absurd.” Pointing out to Darwin that “everybody is interested in pigeons,” he urged that the MS be entirely rewritten to limit the author’s remarks to pigeons, with



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only a brief reference to general principles. His recommendation, he confessed, was based upon a standard publishers' fantasy, that of placing a copy of his book on the tea-table of every pigeon-fancier in Britain. The publisher was willing to put out only an edition of 1,250 copies, which at fifteen shillings was quickly sold out.

The argument about this had driven Darwin to one of those English water-resorts for "the cure." While at this resort he was reading a new novel, ADAM BEDE, and on the evening of this day on which ORIGIN came out, George Eliot ([Herbert Spencer](#)'s girlfriend, sort of, although we have room to hope that they were never intimate) read Darwin's book.

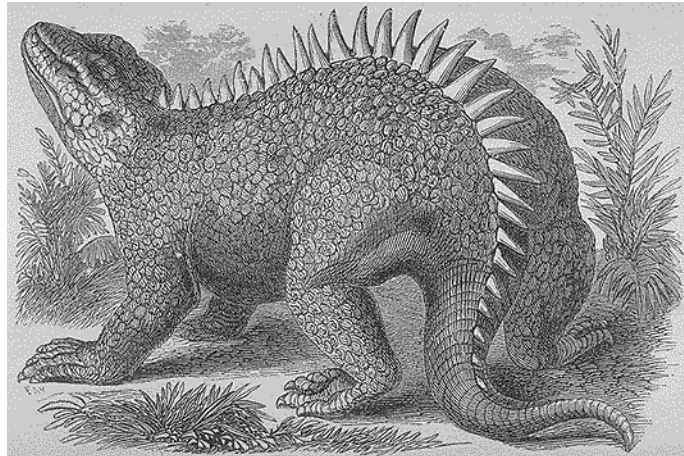


We don't know either what he thought of her fiction or what she thought of his nonfiction. We do know that the publisher's trepidations would prove to have been unwarranted, that two pirate editions would quickly roll off the American presses without the formality of permission or the forwarding of any royalties — and that at Cambridge College, William Whewell would not tolerate such a treatise as the ORIGIN to be placed in the library stacks.

The natural history encyclopedias of the 19th Century rarely included extinct animals. An exception was Samuel Goodrich's ILLUSTRATED NATURAL HISTORY published in this year, in which, upon a notice of the common chameleon, the audience suddenly found itself in the presence of "fossil lizards." Below is its woodcut of the Hylaeosaurus. Other illustrations show the Iguanodon, the Megalosaurus, and a collection of marine reptiles such as Ichthyosaurus. All these illustrations had been copied from the Crystal Palace concretions. Hylaeosaurus had been discovered by Gideon Mantell in 1832  and had been announced in his GEOLOGY OF THE SOUTHEAST OF ENGLAND in 1833.  It was one of Richard Owen's original three dinosaurs and stood proud on the relocated Crystal Palace's grounds:

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[Friend Daniel Ricketson](#)'s journal for this day reads:



*Clear and fine for the season. Left Concord at 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> A.M.*

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[Frederick Douglass](#)'s ship was arriving on this day in Liverpool harbor.



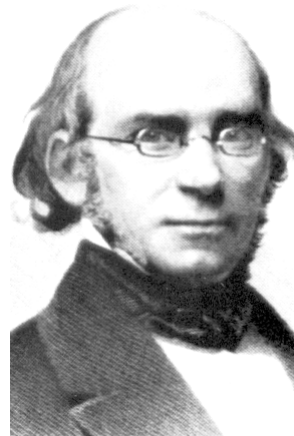
In a private letter, the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), who was entirely unfamiliar with evolutionary theory, confessed on this day to [Francis Jackson](#) (the namesake grandfather of the mentally imbalanced [Francis Jackson Meriam](#) of the [Harpers Ferry](#) raid whom Thoreau would help escape, supposedly toward [Canada](#)) that the reason he did not like slavery was, that if these inferior colored people were allowed to have any place at all in human society, they would merely take the opportunity to **fecundate**. To be kind to them was merely to create more of them that one would need to be kind to. The Reverend was an Aryan possessed of Aryan common sense, a veteran of preaching in downtown Boston to other Aryans possessed of Aryan common

sense, and so of course he belabored the obvious, that:

*An Anglo-Saxon with common sense does not like this Africanization of America.*



**Brit horrified at slavery**



**User horrified at slavery**

Confusing Darwinism with Spencerism and triumphalism (that is, with “Social Darwinism,” as is so very usual), the Reverend [Parker](#) would eventually get around to congratulating himself that on account of his deeply ingrained racism he had been “Darwinian before Darwin” (actually, in this “Anglo-Saxon” Aryan race-soulism of his, what he was in fact was Hitlerian before Hitler).<sup>84</sup>



November 24. The river has risen considerably, at last, owing to the rain of the 22d. Had been very

84. [Adolf Hitler](#), a Catholic, understood something about Christianity which few Christians are able to accept. “Christianity is a rebellion against natural law, a protest against nature” (HITLER’S TABLE TALK, Weidenfield and Nicolson, London 1963). Many German Christians supported Hitler because they had the spirit of Hitler within them while they supposed they had the spirit of Christ within them. Even today some Christians are unable to accept the truth of this remark, because they have the spirit of Hitler, or the Emperor Constantine, within them while they suppose they have the spirit of Christ within them. That sort of Christianity was in fact the only sort of Christianity which my mother in Indiana had ever known, which is why she could not consider me a Christian but needed to agonize over me as an “atheist” howevermuch I insisted that I was attempting to follow the way of Jesus as I construed it. If someone were to tell these “Constantinian” Christians that Hitler said that two plus two equals four, they would try to find some perversity in this remark by which to dismiss it (the guy lost a war, and that has forever discredited him as the leader of the state church), and if someone told them that the problem is not that Hitler did not know what true Christianity is, but that the actual problem is that they themselves do not know what true Christianity is, they .... My mother was in fact, like E.O. Wilson the Harvard sociobiologist, an admirer of Ronald Reagan. Wilson perceived President Reagan as the model of the “soft-core altruist,” which is the good because fake kind of altruist who does not qualify as a Christian “enemy of civilization” (Edward O. Wilson, ON HUMAN NATURE, Harvard UP, Cambridge MA 1978, page 157) because he does not operate out of a mere mindless death-wish. As Mary Midgley has pointed out, “Social Darwinism or Spencerism is the unofficial religion of the west. The official western religion, Christianity, is well known to be rather demanding and to have its eye on the next world rather than this one. In such situations, other doctrines step in to fill the gap. People want a religion for this world as well. They find it in the worship of individual success” (Mary Midgley, EVOLUTION AS A RELIGION: STRANGE HOPES AND STRANGER FEARS, Methuen, London 1985, page 140). The mock altruist is a person whose calculating “good behavior” is well rewarded. His “psychological vehicles are lying, pretense and deceit, including self-deceit, because the actor is most convincing who believes that his performance is real” (page 156). The real altruist, the hard-core one, “irrational,” would in fact be Social Darwinism’s enemy, sociobiology’s enemy, and the enemy of civilization. There were some German Christians, a few, to leaven Hitler’s loaf; they insisted on their right to die by way of the cross rather than the sword. There are some American Christians, a few, to leaven America’s loaf; they are of course condemned, but here they are.





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low before.

See, on the railroad-slope by the pond, and also some days ago, a flock of goldfinches eating the seed of the Roman wormwood. At Spanish Brook Path. the witch-hazel (one flower) lingers.

I observe that ferns grow especially where there is an abrupt or broken bank, as where, in the woods, sand has been anciently dug out of a hillside to make a dam with and the semicircular scar has been covered with a sod and shrubs again. The shelter and steepness are favorable when there is shade and moisture.

How pretty amid the downy and cottony fruits of November the heads of the white anemone, raised a couple of feet from the ground on slender stalks, two or three together,—small heads of yellowish-white down, compact and regular as a thimble beneath, but, at this time, diffusive and bursting forth above, somewhat like a little torch with its flame,—a very neat object!

November 26, Saturday: Louis Moreau Gottschalk arrived back in [Havana](#) aboard the English steamer Trent after a concert tour of several Caribbean islands.

From his cell in Charles Town, Virginia, [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#), who had remained entirely silent throughout his trial for the Harpers Ferry treason, wrote his parents:<sup>85</sup>

*DEAR PARENTS,— my fate as far as man can seal it is sealed but let this not occasion you any misery for remember the cause in which I was engaged, remember that it was a "Holy Cause," one in which men who in every point of view better than I am have suffered and died, remember that if I must die I die in trying to liberate a few of my poor and oppress people from my condition of servitude which God in his Holy Writ has hurled his most bitter denunciations against and in which men who were by the color of their faces removed from the direct injurious affect, have already lost their lives and still more remain to meet the same fate which has been by man decided that I must meet.*

**OBERLIN COLLEGE**

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85. Letter later in the possession of his sister, Miss Mary Copeland of [Oberlin, Ohio](#).




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The Reverend Andrew T. Foss, who been holding to the nonviolent principles of [William Lloyd Garrison](#) and the Reverend [Adin Ballou](#) when he took part in the attempt to rescue Anthony Burns in the streets of Boston, had at some later point entered into an alliance with [Charles Lenox Remond](#) and ceased to be a Nonresistant. He explained that although he would not press the slaves toward rebellion, “when it comes, God knows, I will pray that the slave may be victorious.” At a meeting of an antislavery society in Worcester County, the Reverend [Adin Ballou](#) proposed that they reaffirm their original Declaration of Sentiments of December 4,



1833,  inclusive of its words “Our principles forbid the doing of evil that good may come.” [Charles Lenox Remond](#) responded that he had never supposed, in joining that society, that he had committed himself to such a thing! In fact “I should be glad if a National Vigilance Committee was formed to hang upon every tree and lamppost every slaveholder.”





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[Abby Kelley Foster](#) joined with this challenge to the Reverend Ballou. Then [Stephen Symonds Foster](#) declared that although he was a nonresistant, he claimed also “not to be a fool.”



In response, the Reverend Ballou pointed out the very real scenario, that if America’s blacks freed themselves by means of a bloody massacre, this would render them psychically incompetent to collaborate with whites for many generations, and fill whites with such horror that they also would be animated by loathing and a lust for vengeance: “It may seem hard to wait, but if we do not wait, we shall do worse.” However, the Reverend Ballou’s resolution reaffirming its Declaration of Sentiments, which had been adopted at its founding and which had included the words “Our principles forbid the doing of evil that good may come,” was voted down, and the assembly embraced instead this [Charles Lenox Remond](#)/Andrew T. Foss viewpoint.

[Stephen Symonds Foster](#) tried to organize a new political party which favored “revolution” over “dissolution” of the union, to be named the New England Political Anti-Slavery Society:

“I claim to be a Non-Resistant, but not to be a fool. John Brown has shown himself a **man**, in comparison with the Non-Resistants.”

A contrasting attitude was taken, however, by the Russian Minister, Edouard de Stoeckl, who reported to the government of the Tzar that

When the sad results of this foray became known, John Brown was proclaimed from the very roof-tops as the equal of our Savior. I quote these facts to point out how far Puritan fanaticism can go. Little by little, the extreme doctrines of New England have spread throughout the land.



November 26, Saturday: P.M.—Walk over the Colburn Farm wood-lot south [OF] the road. I find, sometimes, after I have been lotting off a large wood-lot for auction, that I have been cutting new paths to walk in. I cut lines an inch [SIC] or two long in arbitrary directions, in and around some dense woodlot which perhaps is not crossed once a month by any mortal, nor has been for thirty or fifty years, and thus I open to myself new works [SIC],—enough in a lot of forty acres to occupy me for an afternoon. A forty-acre wood-lot



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which otherwise would not detain a walker more than half an hour, being thus opened and carved out, will entertain him for half a day.

In this case there was a cultivated field here some thirty years ago, but, the wood being suffered to spring up, from being open and revealed this part of the earth became a covert and concealed place. Excepting an occasional hunter who crossed it maybe once in several months, nobody has walked there, nobody has penetrated its recesses. The walker habitually goes round it, or follows the single cart-path that winds through it. Woods, both the primitive and those which are suffered to spring up in cultivated fields, thus preserve the mystery of nature. How private and sacred a place a grove thus becomes!—merely because its denseness excludes man. It is worth the while to have these thickets on various sides of the town, where the rabbit lurks and the jay builds its nest.

When I ran out the boundary lines of this lot, I could commonly distinguish the line, not merely by the different growth of wood, but often by a kind of ditch which I think may have been produced by the plow, which heaped up the soil along the side of the field when it was cultivated. I could also detect trees variously bent and twisted, which probably had made part of a hedge fence when young, and others which were scarred by the fencing-stuff that had been fastened to them.

The chickadee is the bird of the wood the most unfailing. When, in a windy, or in any, day, you have penetrated some thick wood like this, you are pretty sure to hear its cheery note therein. At this season it is almost their sole inhabitant.

I see here to-day one brown creeper [*Certhia americana*] busily inspecting the pitch pines. It begins at the base, and creeps rapidly upward by starts, adhering close to the bark and shifting a little from side to side often till near the top, then suddenly darts off downward to the base of another tree, where it repeats the same course.

This has no black cockade, like the nuthatch.

In the midst of this wood there occur less valuable patches, of an eighth of an acre or more, where there is much grass, and cladonia, shrub oaks, and lichen-covered birches, and a few pitch pines only,—places of a comparatively sterile character, as if the soil had been run out. The birches will have much of the birch fungus on them, and their fallen dead tops strew the ground.



PER MABEE, PAGES 322-4: Even among those who still considered themselves nonviolent Garrisonians, Brown's raid brought excited speculation that slave revolts might sharply increase if abolitionists encouraged them. Becoming uneasy over this speculation and the acceptance of violence it implied, [Adin Ballou](#) once president of the Nonresistance Society and still the leader of the nonresistant community at [Hopedale](#), Massachusetts,



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brought the issue out into the open. While Brown was still in a Virginia jail, at a meeting of a Garrisonian Worcester County antislavery society Ballou proposed a resolution reaffirming the Declaration of Sentiments, which had been adopted at the founding of the American Antislavery Society, including the words, "Our principles forbid the doing of evil that good may come." Ballou interpreted the declaration as a nonresistance pledge.

The Salem Negro Charles Remond -who at the 1843 Negro national convention opposed Garnet's calling for slave insurrection but recently had been calling for it himself- grew excited. "I never supposed on becoming a member of this society," Remond told Ballou, "that I committed myself to the nonresistant sentiments to which you have referred. For whenever I have heard the question asked, 'What constitutes a member of the American Antislavery Society?' the only answer I have heard given was this: that a man who believed that the immediate, unconditional emancipation of the slave was right ... is a member of this society." And then Remond made clear the extent to which he had become willing to accept violence: "I should be glad if a National Vigilance Committee was formed," he said, "to hang upon every tree and lamppost every slaveholder. They would be doing a glorious work!" "I am not contending," replied Ballou evenly, "that ... a man cannot be a member of this society unless he is a nonresistant.... What the society should be, as a society, is one thing, and what its individual members should be outside of the society is another thing. In respect to the measures of the society, as a society, it is bound by its declarations.... As a society we are pledged not to resort to ... violence." The Quaker come-outer, Abby Kelley Foster, put Ballou on the spot. She said she would rejoice if the North had gone so far up the moral scale as to point its guns not at slaves, as was then the case, but at slaveholders instead. Would you? she asked Ballou bluntly. Ballou was cautious. "I should rejoice with trembling and sorrow," he replied. Abby's husband, the doughty Stephen S. Foster, spoke up. "I claim to be nonresistant," he said, "but not to be a fool." The audience laughed. "Every man is bound to use the most formidable weapons in his power," Foster continued. "Why should I use the sword when I can do better without it? But," he admitted, "Brown has shown himself a man in comparison with the nonresistants." Foster explained, I want to act more like a man myself. Since slave insurrections are coming in the South, "I want to go down South and guide an insurrection, to preserve it from those excesses which Brother Ballou so much deprecates." Evidently Foster considered that slave revolt by nonviolent methods -such as Birney had hinted at in 1835- was hopeless. He was proposing to be an adviser to slave insurrectionists with the hope of keeping them from the excesses of violence only. Ballou ridiculed Foster's notion that he could guide an insurrection. "How pretty he would look," said Ballou, "undertaking to regulate myriads of raging insurrectionists



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scattered over the Southern country! A rebellion once started would involve all the outrages in the calendar of crime." Besides, if the slaves were freed by rebellion, Ballou added with prescience, "what is to be done with them for the next hundred years? It would take at least a century to educate them out of the ferocity engendered by such conflict. How are they to be employed, trained for liberty, and organized into well ordered communities? And above all how is this work to be accomplished with the great mass of the whites in the country full of horror, loathing, and revenge toward them? ... Can't we wait the operations of a more peaceful process? Can't we content ourselves with holy efforts to bring about a change of public sentiment, so that this thing may be accomplished, without resorting to such horrible measures? It may seem hard to wait, but if we do not wait, we shall do worse." The New Hampshire abolitionist agent, Andrew T. Foss, a long-time Baptist minister, said that he had held to the nonviolent principles of Garrison and Ballou as recently as when he took part in the attempt to rescue Burns in the streets of Boston. But since then he had ceased to be a nonresistant. Indicating Ballou, Foss said, "I do not say that he is not higher than I am. I have an impression, a sort of instinct, that he is. [But] I ask the privilege of working on this platform in my own way.... I don't undertake to justify rebellion [by slaves], but when it comes, God knows, I will pray that the slave may be victorious." The crowd cheered. "Men will come to see," added Foss, "that if our fathers had a right to strike for their liberty, then John Brown had a right to strike for the liberty of the slave." Why did so many abolitionists forget, Ballou replied later in a prophetic statement, "the vast differences between a people trained for liberty and self-government through a century and a half, and millions of long crushed slaves, schooled to servility and studiously kept in ignorance? Such a people need all the help and benefit of a peaceful emancipation." But the meeting accepted the Remond-Foss view. It voted down Ballou's resolution reaffirming the American Society's tradition of nonviolence. Even among Garrisonians, John Brown was reducing faith in nonresistance.

November 28, Monday: [Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the "Swiss [Thoreau](#)," wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: "This evening I heard the first lecture of Ernest Naville on "The Eternal Life." It was admirably sure in touch, true, clear, and noble throughout. He proved that, whether we would or no, we were bound to face the question of another life. Beauty of character, force of expression, depth of thought, were all equally visible in this extemporized address, which was as closely reasoned as a book, and can scarcely be disentangled from the quotations of which it was full. The great room of the Casino was full to the doors, and one saw a fairly large number of white heads."

Prime Minister Leopoldo O'Donnell landed at Ceuta to reinforce the Spanish garrison against Moroccans.

Old and full of years, the beloved American author [Washington Irving](#) died of a heart attack in his home,



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having earned a sum total of \$205,383.<sup>34</sup> from his writings during the course of his life. Here are two sentiments he had recently penned:



*I hope none of those whose interests and happiness are dear to me will be induced to follow my footsteps, and wander into the seductive but treacherous paths of literature. There is no life more precarious in its profits and fallacious in its enjoyments than that of an author.*

*I shouldn't mind about the Niggers if they only brought them over before they had drilled out their tails.*

John Goodwin told [Henry Thoreau](#) that [Alek Therien](#), who was living in Lincoln in a shanty of his own construction, was drinking only checkerberry-tea.

In the evening, at the Concord Town Hall, [Thoreau](#) addressed a planning meeting for the services to be enacted upon the day of the killing of the prisoner [John Brown](#), attended by [Bronson Alcott](#), [Dr. Josiah Bartlett](#), [Simon Brown](#), [Waldo Emerson](#), [John Shepard Keyes](#), and [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#). Alcott noted in his journal that Thoreau had “taken a prominent part in this movement, and arranged for it chiefly.”

The Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) wrote from Worcester to [Lysander Spooner](#) to put on record his utter disagreement with the unworkable plan to rescue John Brown. The sympathies of any mercenaries they would need to hire for such an exploit would undoubtedly be with Virginia, and the state of Virginia could offer far more money than the abolitionists, therefore these people would inevitably sell them out. It seemed useless to him, to waste words on a thing so clear:

The real sympathy of these men is with Virginia. And if we offered them \$1000 apiece, any one of them could make \$2000 in Virginia by telling the project in time to defeat it.... Virginia may be weak and cowardly but she has proved strong enough to defeat us.... There is no need of burning this.



November 28. P. M.—To E. Hubbard's Wood.



Goodwin tells me that Therien, who lives in a shanty of his own building and alone in Lincoln, uses for a drink only checkerberry-tea. (G. also called it “ivory-leaf.”) Is it not singular that probably only one tea-drinker in this neighborhood should use for his beverage a plant which grows here? Therien, really drinking his checkerberry-tea from motives of simplicity or economy and saying nothing about it, deserves well of his country. As he does now, we may all do at last.

There is scarcely a wood of sufficient size and density left now for an owl to haunt in, and if I hear one hoot I may be sure where he is.

Goodwin is cutting out a few cords of dead wood in the midst of E. Hubbard's old lot. This has been Hubbard's practice for thirty years or more, and so, it would seem, they are all dead before he gets to them.

Saw Abel Brooks there with a half-bushel basket on his arm. He was picking up chips on his and neighboring lots; had got about two quarts of old and blackened pine chips, and with these was returning home at dusk more than a mile. Such a petty quantity as you would hardly have gone to the end of your yard for, and yet he said that he had got more than two cords of them at home, which he had collected thus and sometimes with a wheelbarrow. He had thus spent an hour or two and walked two or three miles in a cool November evening to pick up two quarts of pine chips scattered through the woods. He evidently takes real satisfaction in collecting his fuel, perhaps gets more heat of all kinds out of it than any man in town. He is not reduced to taking a walk



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for exercise as some are. It is one thing to own a wood-lot as he does who perambulates its bounds almost daily, so as to have worn a path about it, and another to own one as many another does who hardly knows where it is. Evidently the quantity of chips in his basket is not essential; it is the chippy idea which he pursues. It is to him an unaccountably pleasing occupation. And no doubt he loves to see his pile grow at home. Think how variously men spend the same hour in the same village! The lawyer sits talking with his client in the twilight; the trader is weighing sugar and salt; while Abel Brooks is hastening home from the woods with his basket half full of chips. I think I should prefer to be with Brooks. He was literally as smiling as a basket of chips. A basket of chips, therefore, must have been regarded as a singularly pleasing (if not pleased) object. We make a good deal of the early twilights of these November days, they make so large a part of the afternoon.

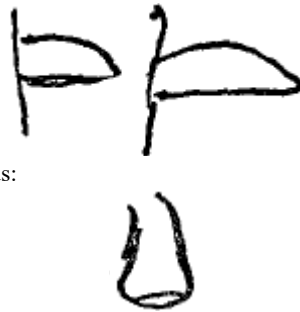
November 29, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) handed [Waldo Emerson](#) \$10.<sup>00</sup> toward the [John Brown](#) Relief Fund and Emerson noted this amount in his account book. (This amount of money would have represented, for Thoreau, approximately 8 or 9 full days of his surveying work.)

[Miss Louisa May Alcott](#) received \$50.<sup>00</sup> for her “Love and Self-Love,” accepted by [The Atlantic Monthly](#) — although this magazine’s insouciant editor, [Mr. James Russell Lowell](#), felt so poorly of the authorial abilities of females in general, that he was supposing that she must’ve merely translated this piece from some other language (such as German).



November 29. P. M.—To Copan.

There is a white birch on Copan which has many of the common birch fungus of a very peculiar and remarkable form, not flat thus:



but shaped like a bell or short horn, thus:

as if composed of a more flowing material which had settled downward like a drop. As C. said, they were shaped like icicles, especially those short and spreading ones about bridges. Saw quite a flock of snow buntings not yet very white. They rose from the midst of a stubble-field unexpectedly. The moment they settled after wheeling around, they were perfectly concealed, though quite near, and I could only hear their rippling note from the earth from time to time.





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November 30, Wednesday: Lombardy was officially annexed by the Kingdom of Sardinia.

Presidential candidate [Abraham Lincoln](#) crossed the Missouri River at St. Joseph by ferry and spoke at Elwood in "[Bleeding Kansas.](#)"



THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

According to the Elwood [Free Press](#) for December 3rd, the senatorial candidate's remarks were received there with great enthusiasm:

He stated the reasons why he was unable to make a speech this evening. He could only say a few words to us who had come out to meet him the first time he had placed his foot upon the soil of Kansas. Mr. Lincoln said that it was possible that we had local questions in regard to Railroads, Land Grants and internal improvements which were matters of deeper interest to us than the questions arising out of national politics, but of these local interests he knew nothing and should say nothing. We had, however, just adopted a State Constitution, and it was probable, that, under that Constitution, we should soon cease our Territorial existence, and come forward to take our place in the brotherhood of States, and act our parts as a member of the confederation. Kansas would be Free, but the same questions we had had here in regard to Freedom or Slavery would arise in regard to other Territories and we should have to take our part in deciding them. People often ask, "why make such a fuss about a few niggers?" I answer the question by asking what will you do to dispose of this question? The Slaves constitute one seventh of our entire population. Wherever there is an element of this magnitude in a government it will be talked about. The general feeling in regard to Slavery had changed entirely since the early days of the Republic. You may examine the debates under the Confederation, in the Convention that framed the Constitution and in the first session of Congress and you will not find a single man saying that Slavery is a good thing. They all believed it was an evil. They made the Northwest Territory -the only Territory then belonging to the government- forever free. They prohibited the African Slave trade. Having thus



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prevented its extension and cut off the supply, the Fathers of the Republic believed Slavery must soon disappear. There are only three clauses in the Constitution which refer to Slavery, and in neither of them is the word Slave or Slavery mentioned. The word is not used in the clause prohibiting the African Slave trade; it is not used in the clause which makes Slaves a basis of representation; it is not used in the clause requiring the return of fugitive Slaves. And yet in all the debates in the Convention the question was discussed and Slaves and Slavery talked about. Now why was this word kept out of that instrument and so carefully kept out that a European, be he ever so intelligent, if not familiar with our institutions, might read the Constitution over and over again and never learn that Slavery existed in the United States. The reason is this. The Framers of the Organic Law believed that the Constitution would outlast Slavery and they did not want a word there to tell future generations that Slavery had ever been legalized in America. Your Territory has had a marked history – no other Territory has ever had such a history. There had been strife and bloodshed here, both parties had been guilty of outrages; he had his opinions as to the relative guilt of the parties, but he would not say who had been most to blame. One fact was certain – there had been loss of life, destruction of property; our material interests had been retarded. Was this desirable? There is a peaceful way of settling these questions – the way adopted by government until a recent period. The bloody code has grown out of the new policy in regard to the government of Territories. Mr. Lincoln in conclusion adverted briefly to the Harper's Ferry Affair. He believed the attack of Brown wrong for two reasons. It was a violation of law and it was, as all such attacks must be, futile as far as any effect it might have on the extinction of a great evil. We have a means provided for the expression of our belief in regard to Slavery – it is through the ballot box – the peaceful method provided by the Constitution. John Brown has shown great courage, rare unselfishness, as even Gov. Wise [Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) of Virginia] testifies. But no man, North or South, can approve of violence or crime. Mr. Lincoln closed his brief speech by wishing all to go out to the election on Tuesday and to vote as became the Freemen of Kansas.



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Maria Black of Rock Island, [Illinois](#) wrote to Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) of Virginia:



*Rock Island*

*Illinois*

*Novr 30th '59*

*Gov'r Wise*

*Dear Sir*

*My two daughters have left with a party of young women who purpose to effect the rescue of John Brown. They number about sixteen & wear large petticoats filled with powder, having slow matches attached. If caught they intend to set themselves off & (so effective is the inflammable material about them) the consequence will be awful. In fact, Virginia will be blown sky high. My anxiety about my two children aforesaid & my affectionate concern for your welfare induce me to forewarn you of the imminent peril that awaits you. If you find the girls, send them back before the blow up & send some chivalry along. There is none of your kind up north.*

*Truly yrs*

*Maria Black*

**JOHN BROWN**

William L. Taylor, James J. Rankin, and Cambridge Ritter also were writing this governor:



*Newyork Nov 30/59*

*to Dishonorable Gov Wise*

*[image of skull and crossbones]*

*death to you if John Brown not pardoned*

*Look for our Band it is dress in Black*

*in name of Black Band of NewYork*

*Pres William L. Taylor*

*Sec James J. Rankin*

*Tres Cambridge Ritter*

**JOHN BROWN**

[Bronson Alcott](#) recorded in his journal that he had seen [Henry Thoreau](#) again, and [Waldo Emerson](#), in regard to the "Brown Services" that they were planning for that Friday: "We do not intend to have any speeches made on the occasion, but have selected appropriate passages from Brown's words, from the poets, and from the Scriptures, to be read by Thoreau, Emerson, and myself, chiefly; and the selection and arrangement is ours." The reason for this is obvious. In case there is an infiltrator at this meeting in the Concord Town Hall, and they are charged with treason, they will be able to defend themselves by pointing out that no treasonous remark of any sort was uttered, and that they had merely been a literary group meeting to read to one another from the



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classics, and from records of current events!

**JOHN BROWN**



November 30: I am one of a committee of four, viz. Simon Brown (Ex-Lieutenant-Governor), [R.W. Emerson](#), myself, and [John Keyes](#) (late High Sheriff), instructed by a meeting of citizens to ask liberty of the selectmen to have the bell of the first parish tolled at the time Captain Brown is being hung, and while we shall be assembled in the town house to express our sympathy with him. I applied to the selectmen yesterday. Their names are George M. Brooks, Barzillai Hudson, and Julius Smith. After various delays they at length answer me to-night that they "are uncertain whether they have any control over the bell, but that, *in any case*, they will not give their consent to have the bell tolled." Beside their private objections, they are influenced by the remarks of a few individuals. Dr. Bartlett tells me that Rockwood Hoar said he "hoped no such foolish thing would be done," and he also named Stedman Buttrick, John Moore, Cheney (and others added Nathan Brooks, senior, and Francis Wheeler) as strongly opposed to it; said that he had heard "five hundred" (!) damn me for it, and that he had no doubt that if it were done some counter-demonstration would be made, such as firing minute-guns. The doctor himself is more excited than anybody, for he has the minister under his wing. Indeed, a considerable part of Concord are in the condition of Virginia to-day,—afraid of their own shadows.

I see in E. Hubbard's gray oak wood, four rods from the old wall line and two or three rods over the brow of the hill, an apparent downy woodpecker's nest in a dead white oak stub some six feet high. It is made as far as I can see, like that which I have, but looks quite fresh, and I see, by the very numerous fresh white chips of dead wood scattered over the recently fallen leaves beneath, that it must have been made since the leaves fell. Could it be a nuthatch or chickadee's work? [EDITORIAL COMMENT: PROBABLY A DOWNY WOODPECKER'S WINTER QUARTERS.]

This has been a very pleasant month, with quite a number of Indian-summer days,—a pleasanter month than October was. It is quite warm to-day, and as I go home at dusk on the railroad causeway, I hear a hylodes peeping.

**DR. JOSIAH BARTLETT**



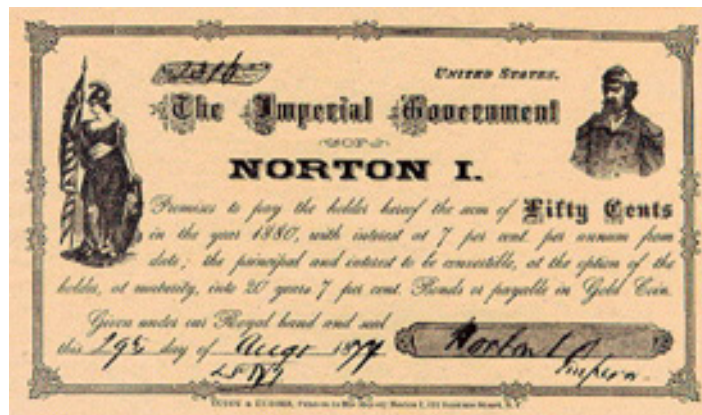
## RACE WAR,

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December: Late in this year [Secretary of War John Buchanan Floyd](#) dispatched more than 115,000 muskets and rifles to southern states.



An edict from the Emperor of San Francisco: “**DISAPPROVING** of the act of Gov. Wise of Virginia in hanging [Gen. Brown](#) at Charlestown, Va., on 2nd December; **AND CONSIDERING** that the said Brown was insane and that he ought to have been sent to the Insane Asylum for capturing the State of Virginia with seventeen men; **NOW KNOW ALL MEN** that I do hereby discharge him, Henry A. Wise, from said office, and appoint John C. Breckenridge, of [Kentucky](#), to said office of Governor of our province of Virginia.”



[Luke Fisher Parsons](#) wrote from [Osawatomie, Kansas](#) to [James Redpath](#) and [Richard Josiah Hinton](#) in regard to their “notice in the [Republican](#) in regard to publishing the life of [John Brown](#) & associates at [Harpers Ferry](#) & your request for information.”



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Dear Friends Redpath & Hinton  
Seeing your notice in Republican in regard to publishing the life of John Brown & associates at Harpers Ferry & your request for information, I endeavour to comply. My acquaintance with Brown commences with the Black-Jack fight I was also with him at the fight in this place, but the account of these, you must already have. I became acquainted with Cook, & Realf, in Lawrence with Whipple (A.D. Stephens) while in Topeka on the 4th of July 1856 But you your selves know all about these men untill after this time. Leeman came in the territory in the same [trane] of emigrants & at the same time that R.J. Hinton did, & I think with Dr. Cutter at least he had been a working in Mass. at shoe making immediately previous. On Nov 24th of 1857. Realf Cook & myself left Lawrence to Join Brown & Co. in Tabor Iowa. We went by stage via Leavenworth Weston & St. Joe. Brown a short time previously had left Topeka for Tabor taking with him Col. Whipple, [Chas] Moffatt, (Whose name appeares on the Provisional Constitution with the rest) & a runaway negro from Lexington Mo. (also signed constitution) when we arrived in Tabor we found Brown with the above named persons & also Kagi (who went from Topeka) C.P. Tidd (who had lived in tabor a year or more) also Owen Brown who fought with the old man, & was one of the 9 who recieved the arms of 27 of H.C. Pates men at Blackjack. Whill in Tabore & before leaving for Springdale, Brown made the Tabor people an offer to this effect, that if they would defray the actual expenses of his company (10 in all) to Nebraska City & back, he would place safe in their hands a slave that had runaway from Mo. & had his arm broken & amputated from the effects of a shot recieved in captureing him. The slave was then in jail in that place. They declined doing so for fear that it would involve them in a difficulty. We traveled with 2 covered wagons loaded so that we all walked, camped out, part of the time the weather was very colde, & snow was on the [ground]. We did not travel sundays. Evenings when the work was done & we were seated arround a large log fire once a week we had a Lyceums or discussions of some question usually proposed by B. & he always presiding. Other evenings were frequently spent in singing, by Browns request, who always joined with a harty good will He used to name the peices that he wanted sung & very frequently "The Slave has seen the northern stars" "From Greenlands Icy mountains" &c. &c, We stoped near the town of Springdale Cedar Co. Iowa all winter. A good olde Quaker by the name of Maxon boarded us for \$1.50 a week. During that winter we went thro a pretty thorough military course of instruction from under Col. Whipple as Drillmaster Studying "High Forbes Manual for the Patriotic Voluntar." We were drilled in open day light 3 hrs each day. While here Realf & Cook frequently lectured in the different school districts. During this winter Brown was in the east endeavouring to prepare for events in the comeing spring (of '58) we frequently heard from B. during winter. A few weeks before we started for L.C. Kagi went home with me & spent



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a few weeks. (in Byron Ogle Co. Ill) he lectured in Byron & was liked very much. He was dressed rather poorly & looked pretty rough. The people made the remark that "Kagi was like a singed cat better than he looks." When B. returned for us, he received so favourable a report from those peace loving Quakers, that he said "He should not have been better pleased if they had presented him with one thousand dollars."

We went to the town of Chatham in L.C. & there we formed the [Provincional] Constitution signed by every one in the house by his own hand (mostly colored) The intention was then to go immediately to work. We faild I think partly owing to the hard times but mostly by the efforts put forth by Hugh Forbs, about that time At going rate the money that was should have been forth comeing was not furnished nor couldnt be got. We passed from Chatham to Cleveland & then scattered about to work to support our selvs during B's absence of 2 mo. to try to stir up some monied friends, he returned postponed for 1 year took Kagi & Tidd with him & went to Kansas. R. Realf went to N.Y. & thence to England. Cook to Harpers Ferry. Whipple & G. B. Gill (Gill joined in Iowa) went to Iowa Stewart Tailor (joined in Iowa) went to Mich. Owen Brown went to his brother Jason in Acron Summit Co. O. Leeman Moffatt & my-self went to work in Lindenville Ashtabula Co. O. What they did in Kansas I know only by papers & hearsay for we did not hear from them. But while here Anderson & Haslit joined him. Our Justice Cook is here & intimately acquainted with them who promised me to write you about them. On his way to Canada in the spring of '59 in Springdale Edwin Coppic & Barkly Cappic joined with him. The reason that Gill & Moffatt donte appear to be with the rest I cannot tell unless it be that he did not want so many, so many & I presume that that is the reason that I was not there. too For early in the spring not having hearde anything from Brown & the times continuing harde Moffatt & myself started, he for Iowa & I for Ill. but I immediately started for Pikes P. but turned back during the [prairie] & stoped here

I immediately wrote to John Brown Jr (not knowing where B. was And signified my willingness to continue with him if there was a prospect of doing something some time.

Jason Brown fought here with the Olde man. There is an [acdote] reported by those that were at Ft. Scot at the release of Rice, of Kagi. To this effect While in town there was firing from Littles store on the boys Kagi had only a pistol but seeing a man down there he went down while getting walking along not thinking himself near enough to shoote with pistol the man on steps raised his gun but K. kept right on the man held his gun for a moment & then fired, but K. kept right on, he then raised his gun to fire the other barel, but K. thinking himself near enough to fire raised his pistol & the man took down his gun & immediately dodged in behinde the door, thinking that K. was invulnerable.

In the Kansas City Metropoloton of about Nov 25th the Editor in



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speaking of the affairs at H's Ferry says that it is a democratic movement began in Kansas, & in proof, quotes from a memorandum found on one of the prisoners, reading thus, "Democrats Kagi, Moffatt, Parsons, Cook, & Leeman. Republicans, Realf, Whipple, Tidd, Robertson" (who is the Lexington slave) & (O) "Brown." I wish to correct this mistake to you least the ideas may in someway get out that some of them are really Democrats While in Iowa we had saturday nights for our diversion so we formed work Ledislature called it the state of Topeka Those Democrats named were Democratic representatives of different districts, the Republicans Republican representatives &c.

A few A day or so after the fight at Osawatomie Brown with his handful of men moved up the river 2 or 3 miles in the timber & finding that the Ruffians were a scouring the country in companies of from 10 to 50 & supposing that they were in search of him & co as they did not succeed in killing them, Brown proposed that if he could get 20 men to stand by him he would fortify & stand them another fight, he spent some time to get signatures but so many were sick & discouraged that he only got 12 or 14. Then B. said if he could get 15 men he would stand his ground, every one that was on consented to the new arrangement & he succeeded in getting enough to get work, 15 when we commenced to work on fortification, but the weather being very warm others were taken sick so that we were compelled to abandon the project.

What I have written is in a [jumbled] up mess, & written as it came into my head, I have said a great deal that has no bearing atall on the life of Brown & not much that does, or not mutch that you may think interesting, But if you can cull anything from this or use any part of it you are welcome to do so.

You may use my name at any time, & in any place, where you think it comes in connection with your work, for I donte do anything that I am asshamed of, or affraid to have the people know about. In your notice in the paper, You donte mention the name of Owen Brown. I hope you wont overlook him. He was at Harpers Ferry, is (I think) the youngest of B's sons, of his first wife, own bro to John, Jason & Fred.

Wishing you speedy success in your enterprise,  
I remain yours for Freedom & Reform

L.F. Parsons

P.S. Leeman is from Hallowell Ne. & the youngest of B's company. 'Tis said that Realf died on his return voyage. The Coppic's live in Sprindale Iowa.

L.F.P.

[Luke Fisher Parsons](#) continued in his diary:

December 12, [1859](#): Left Jones' and arrived at Osawatomie soon after noon.

December 15, [1859](#): Heard that the Governor of Missouri had made





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a requisition on Gov. Sam Medary for all persons who helped slaves get away.

December 19, [1859](#): Got a letter from step-father writing me to come home.

December 22, [1859](#): Heard that there were warrants issued for all that were engaged in sending the slave hunters home quicker than they came.

December 24, [1859](#): No money yet, nor prospect of any. Am almost naked.

December 25, [1859](#): Christmas they tell me, but I have not seen anything of the good eating arrangements.

December 28, [1859](#): Heard that there was an indictment found against me by the Grand Jury at Ft. Scott and a warrant issued on the indictment.

December 29, [1859](#): Heard that the Marshal is coming with a Posse to arrest me and others. We slept with our firearms.

December 30, [1859](#): Dance at Fisher's. Could not go because I didn't have any clothes.

December 31, [1859](#): Very cold and did not work. Marshal and Posse did not show up.

December: Letter from [Lydia Maria Child](#) to Oliver Johnson ASS: [John Brown](#)'s execution and burial.



## RACE WAR,

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December: An anonymous missive to Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) of Virginia, undated, presumably sometime during December:



*Gov. Wise*

*Hon Sir*

*As Virginia has received from her Sister State Pennsylvania a peace offering flag, it is no more than fair that another sister should be presented in her peculiar way, please therefore accept the accompanying appropriate design.*

*The flag pictured here is the "New England Black Republican, Abolition Rule or Ruin, Disunion Flag" destined to take the place of the present Glorious Eagle, Stars & Stripes Flag of this Great Republic and that no mistake may occur as to the Emblems a description is added.*

*In lieu of the usual spear on the head of the flag & staff (which is in form of a cross) a Gallows with a John Brown embellishment is substituted. A wooden Ham & 32 wooden Nutmegs on a Blood red field take the place of the Eagle and stars. The ballance of the flag being black is quite suggestive of the general intention of the Party of which this is the Standard*

### REPUBLICAN PARTY

In this timeframe Mrs. [Rebecca B. Spring](#) not only wrote to but, twice, with her son, visited Captain [John Brown](#) in prison. Her expenses to provide Captain Brown and [Aaron D. Stevens](#) with flowers, books, clothing, medicine, and food during their incarceration prior to execution amounted to some \$400, approximately one year's income for a day laborer. She even sent them music. She would inform a newspaper reporter that what he had said to her was "I do not think I can better serve the cause I love so much, than to die for it!"



The Republicans were being referred to as the Black Republicans, in order to indicate the general sense of the

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country, that these were people who harbored an unsavory prejudice in favor of the unworthy, blacks and Irish:



The long autobiographical letter which [John Brown](#) had written on July 15, 1857  to [George Luther Stearns](#) was made available to [Waldo Emerson](#), who would use the allegations and much of their phrasing in his speech of January 6, 1860  in Salem on the history of Brown's abolitionism.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY



## RACE WAR,

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According to Seymour Drescher's "[Servile Insurrection](#) and John Brown's Body in Europe":

The most famous and graphic European image to appear in the wake of the raid on Harper's Ferry was an engraving, entitled *John Brown*. Against a dark landscape and a dull, cloudy sky a small human figure hangs from a gallows. The body's features are almost completely blanketed in shadow. From the heavens alone come shafts of light, breaking through the dreary obscurity to fall upon the gallows and the figure. Beneath this bleak illustration initially appeared the words: "*Pro Christo-Sicut Christus, John Brown, - Charleston. Designed by Victor Hugo.*"

The engraving was the frontispiece to the most widely publicized commentary on [John Brown](#) to reach America from across the Atlantic. Victor Hugo's letter on John Brown, originally written in early December 1859, was reprinted in newspapers and pamphlets on both sides of the Atlantic and was viewed by American abolitionists as a document that "will be read by millions with thrilling emotions." In it, France's most famous contemporary writer declared in exclamatory prose that the whole civilized world (namely, England, France, and Germany) was witnessing with horror a travesty of justice — "not in Turkey, but in America!" "The champion of Christ ... slaughtered by the American Republic," "the assassination of Emancipation by Liberty," ... "something more terrible than Cain slaying Abel ... Washington slaying [Spartacus](#)!" Hugo had written the letter as an impassioned public plea to save Brown from execution. The engraving was appended to later publications of the letter to portray Brown as a crucified Christian martyr and slave emancipator, with the gibbet as his cross.

I don't know when he wrote this, but [Bronson Alcott](#) would write a "Sonnet XXIV, Addressed to John Brown, Harper's Ferry":

Bold Saint, thou firm believer in the Cross,  
Again made glorious by self-sacrifice,—  
Love's free atonement given without love's loss,—  
That martyrdom to thee was lighter pain,  
Since thus a race its liberties should gain;  
Flash its sure consequence in Slavery's eyes  
When, 'scaping sabre's clash and battle's smoke,  
She felt the justice of thy master-stroke:  
Peaceful prosperity around us lies,  
Freedom with loyalty thy valor gave;  
Whilst thou, no felon doomed, for gallows fit,  
O Patriot true! O Christian meek and brave!  
Throned in the martyrs' seat henceforth shalt sit;  
Prophet of God! Messiah of the Slave!

I don't know when she wrote this, but [Louisa May Alcott](#) would write a poem "With a Rose, That Bloomed on the Day of John Brown's Martyrdom":

In the long silence of the night,  
Nature's benignant power



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Woke aspirations for the light  
    Within the folded flower.  
Its presence and the gracious day  
    Made summer in the room.  
But woman's eyes shed tender dew  
    On the little rose in bloom.

Then blossomed forth a grander flower,  
    In the wilderness of wrong.  
Untouched by Slavery's bitter frost,  
    A soul devout and strong.  
God-watched, that century plant uprose,  
    Far shining through the gloom.  
Filling a nation with the breath  
    Of a noble life in bloom.

A life so powerful in its truth,  
    A nature so complete;  
It conquered ruler, judge and priest,  
    And held them at its feet.  
Death seemed proud to take a soul  
    So beautifully given,  
And the gallows only proved to him  
    A stepping-stone to heaven.

Each cheerful word, each valiant act,  
    So simple, so sublime,  
Spoke to us through the reverent hush  
    Which sanctified that time.  
That moment when the brave old man  
    Went so serenely forth  
With footsteps whose unfaltering tread  
    Reëchoed through the North.

The sword he wielded for the right  
    Turns to a victor's palm;  
His memory sounds forever more,  
    A spirit-stirring psalm.  
No breath of shame can touch his shield,  
    Nor ages dim its shine;  
Living, he made life beautiful,—  
    Dying, made death divine.

No monument of quarried stone,  
    No eloquence of speech  
Can grave the lessons on the land  
    His martyrdom will teach.  
No eulogy like his own words,  
    With hero-spirit rife,  
"I truly serve the cause I love,  
    By yielding up my life."

December 1, Thursday: [Bronson Alcott](#) wrote in his journal that he had again seen [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Waldo Emerson](#), in regard to the "Brown Services" being arranged for the day of the hanging of [John Brown](#):

It is arranged that I am to read the Martyr Service, Thoreau selections from the poets, and Emerson from Brown's words.



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In Virginia, [Mrs. Mary Day Brown](#) was allowed to visit with her husband for several hours in his cell. Previously (perhaps because he knew she had been involved in planning with the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy to convince him that martyrdom was not his lot and to effect his escape), he had been refusing to see her.

On this bitterly cold morning Presidential candidate [Abraham Lincoln](#) continued on from Elwood, [Kansas](#) to Troy, speaking there for nearly 2 hours in the early afternoon, and then continued some 10 miles to Doniphan where he delivered another speech and would spend the night.

**THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION**



November 30, December 1 and 2 were remarkably warm and springlike days,—a moist warmth. The crowing of cocks and other sounds remind you of spring, such is the state of the air. I wear only one coat.

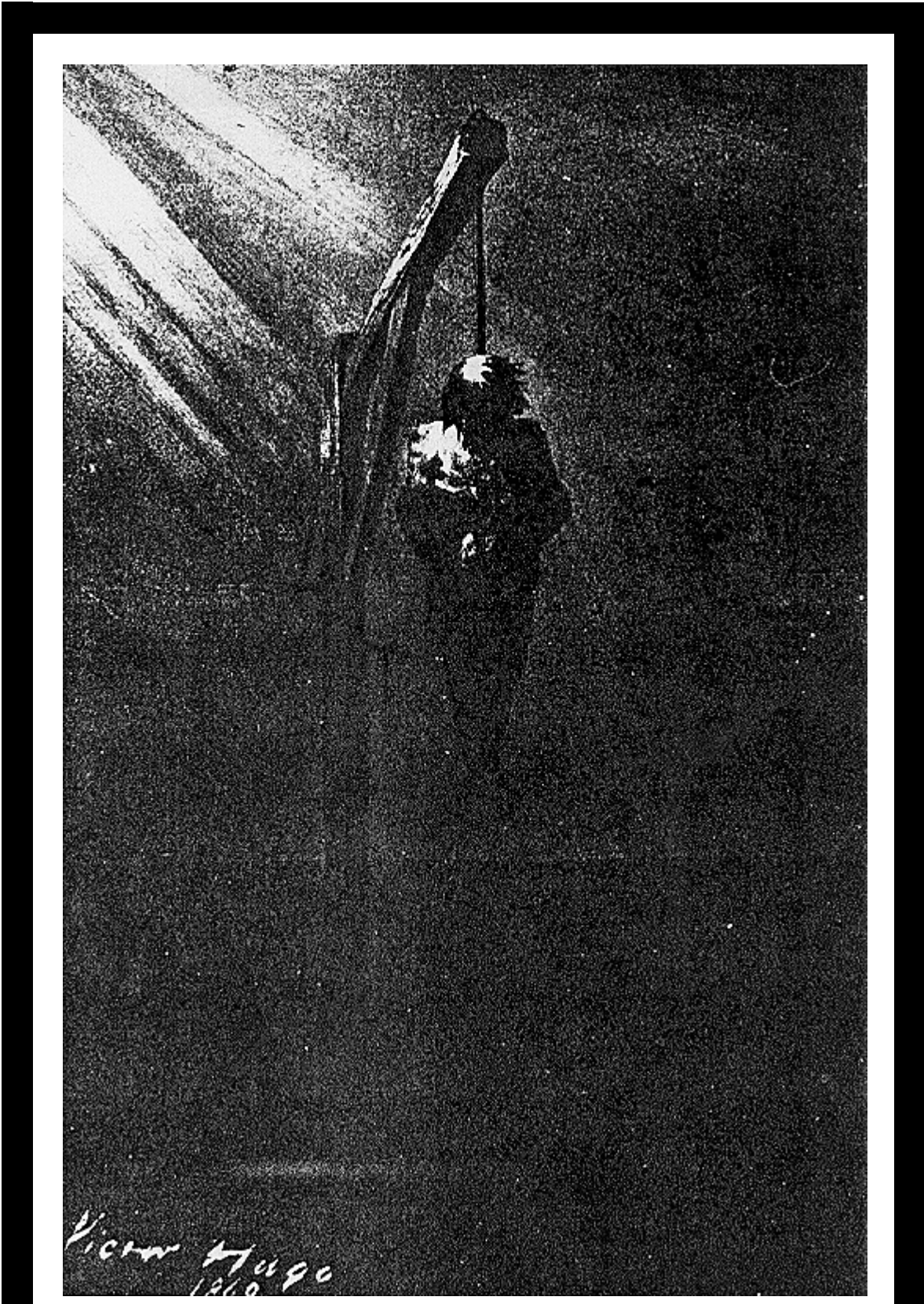
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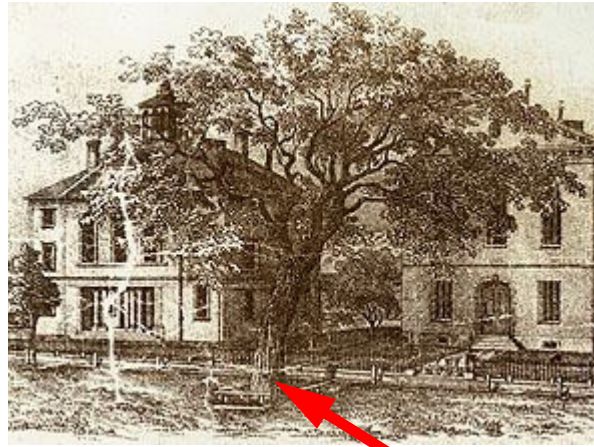




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December 2, Friday morning: A life-size effigy of Captain [John Brown](#) was found tied to a large tree in front of the Concord Town Hall and quickly cut down.



It bore a note:

*Last Will and Testament of Old John Brown, of Jefferson County, Virginia.*

*I bequeath to Hon. Simon Brown my execution robe, the emblem of spotless purity and an unswerving politician.*

*I bequeath to Hon. John S. Keyes my execution cord, made of material warranted to last to hang all the aiders and abettors of Old John Brown.*

*I bequeath to H.D. Thoreau, Esq., my body and soul, he having eulogized my character and actions at Harper's Ferry above the Saints in Heaven.*

*I bequeath to my beloved friend, Charles Bowers, my old boots, and emblems of the souls of those I have murdered.*

*I bequeath to Ralph Waldo Emerson all my personal property, and my execution cap, which contains nearly all the brains I ever had.*

*I bequeath to Dr. Josiah Bartlett the superintending of the ringing of the bells, and flags at half-mast, union down.*

**JOHN SHEPARD KEYES**

**WALDO EMERSON**

**DR. JOSIAH BARTLETT**

Both the effigy and the note were quickly destroyed, but a copy of the will would appear the next day in the *Boston Post*, with a synopsis of the day's events in [Concord](#). [Henry Thoreau](#) would later remark in his journal: "Certain persons disgraced themselves by hanging Brown in effigy in this town on the 2d. I was glad to know that the only four whose names I heard mentioned in connection with it had not been long resident here, and had done nothing to secure the respect of the town."





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1859, broke clear and summerlike over a nation solemn and awed by the grim business taking place in Virginia. Southerners put up a facade of business-as-usual, but in the free states church bells tolled morning, noon, and night from Cape Cod to Kansas. In Concord, [Thoreau](#) argued with the narrow-minded selectmen who [were refusing] to endorse the ringing and [were threatening] to fire off the town's minute guns [in celebration of this traitor's execution] as a countermeasure, but in Albany the council authorized a one-hundred-gun salute in tribute to Brown and in Syracuse the great fire bell in City Hall rang mournfully all through the day. In Hartford three men climbed to the top of the state capital's dome and draped a statue of Liberty in mourning. Cleveland residents hung crepe banners in its streets, bankers closed their doors in Akron, and public prayer meetings took place in churches in New York and Philadelphia, the tabernacles of black congregations from Detroit to New Bedford, and the clapboard meetinghouses of New England and the Western Reserve. In Boston an interracial union service ran all day in the Twelfth Street Baptist Church, and when at four in the afternoon the telegraph confirmed that the execution had taken place a little before noon, many business places, black and white, closed and people put on mourning bands or rosettes studded with a likeness of the martyred Brown. Willie Garrison that afternoon received a private shock. Stopping by the Phillipses' to meet his friend Phoebe Garnaut, he discovered her deep in conversation with George Hoyt, the young attorney who had defended Brown, and he "unavoidably caught the information that Francis Meriam was in Boston." Let in on the secret, Willie learned that his old schoolmate had endured an eight-day escape on foot, pursued by baying hounds around him, hiding in thickets, and stumbling along a railroad track in a snowstorm before gaining fresh clothes and shelter among friends who helped him to Canada. Where he grew restless and struck out for home "under the insane idea that he must revenge Brown's death." Hoyt was convinced that the unstable young man had to be "gotten out of the way forthwith," and Phillips had gone to consult with Mr. Jackson about the arrangements. Overwrought, eyes filmed over, babbling incoherently, Meriam was a pitiable sight, but the old abolitionists dispatched him that night to Concord, where a nervous Sanborn, certain that Meriam would yet expose them all, got a friend -later identified as Thoreau- to drive the agitated young man to an out-of-the-way station and muscle him onto a westbound train and a second exile in the black community at [Chatham](#), Ontario, just across the river from Detroit. If the editor [[William Lloyd Garrison](#)] knew that day of Meriam's presence, he never acknowledged it, but spent the afternoon overseeing the arrangements for the meeting at Tremont Temple. Lydia Maria Child had come in from Wayland the day before expressly to help him, and the two old apostles recalled their pioneering years in the movement as they decorated the platform and positioned placards and slogans around the barn-like



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auditorium – Saint Paul’s “Remember them in bonds . . .,” Jeremiah’s “Execute justice in the morning . . .,” Jefferson’s “I tremble for my country . . .,” Henry’s “Give me liberty . . .,” and other key statements of the American civil and spiritual litany. No funeral drapery, no black crepe, they decreed, and they made instead a lectern centerpiece of Brown’s portrait supported by a cross and wreathed in evergreen and amaranth. Above the stage they hung a bright painted banner bearing the Great Seal of Virginia with its insurrectionary image of Liberty’s soldier bestride a vanquished oppressor and the confident motto “Sic Semper Tyrannis.” Just before the program began –half an hour early owing to the crush of four thousand people in the seats and three thousand more crowded in the street outside– a young man unfurled a banner from the gallery reading, “He dies by the mandate of the Slave Power, yet ‘still lives’ by virtue of his heroic deeds,” and the temple erupted in an immense shout that gave the keynote for the evening. There were many speakers, including the militant young fugitive slave John Sella Martin, who had recently assumed the pastorate of the Belknap Street Church. He first stunned the audience by charging that America had delivered up “the Barabbas of Slavery” and crucified “the John Brown of Freedom,” and then brought the crowd to its feet by exclaiming that as a Christian and peace man, he would not quibble with John Brown for taking the revolutionary means extolled by white men and using them for black men instead. There were poems and tears and prayers and a collection for the Brown family taken up by a cadre of young men that included Willie Garrison. The meeting, however, was his father’s idea, and though the subject was Brown, the night belonged to the editor. It was Garrison who read aloud the victim’s now-celebrated address to the court, and it was Garrison who, upon rising once more to give the eulogy, basked in the overwhelming affection the emanated from every part of the hall and fused the aura of Brown’s martyrdom and the radiant energy of the pioneer into a beam of truth illuminated.

“Captain” [John Brown](#), having been duly found guilty of treason and murder by a jury of his white male peers, was on this day to be hanged. Cleaning up on the prison cell, a guard came upon a discarded letter from Mrs. Mahala Doyle, widow of a Catholic from Tennessee whom Brown had chopped on Pottawatomie Creek in the [Kansas Territory](#) on account of his Southern drawl. This is the missive to which Brown had made no response: “Although vengeance is not mine, I confess that I do feel gratified to hear that you were stopped in your fiendish career at Harpers Ferry with the loss of your two sons. You can now appreciate my distress in Kansas when you then and there entered my house at midnight and arrested my husband and two boys, and took them out in the yard, and in cold blood [killed] them dead in my hearing.” On the Canadian side of Niagara Falls, the conspirators [George Luther Stearns](#) and [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#) of the [Secret “Six”](#) conspiracy sat listening to “the dirge of the cataract” at about 11:30AM, the time of Brown’s hanging. In Rome, the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), who was also aware that this was the day of Brown’s hanging, was coughing blood in a darkened bedroom and conversing with his physician: “I shall be seeing Brown soon. We two have an appointment; my old friend and I are booked on separate trains to the same distant place. I shall ask him when



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I see him there. Hold a séance and I shall let you know his answer. (Spasm of coughing) Yes, good doctor. Hold a séance as old [William Lloyd Garrison](#) will most assuredly do, and —should I get through, should I even be a thing that would know to want to get through— I’ll give you that and oh, so many other answers.”<sup>86</sup>

That morning Presidential candidate [Abraham Lincoln](#) had traveled on in [Kansas](#) to Atchison, arriving in the afternoon and at 8PM beginning a 2 hour and 20 minute speech before a large crowd in the auditorium of the Methodist Church. When the news of Brown’s hanging reached him, Lincoln commented that although Brown had “shown great courage, rare unselfishness,” he had simply gone too far. “Old John Brown has just been executed for treason against the state. We cannot object, even though he agreed with us in thinking slavery wrong. That cannot excuse violence, bloodshed, and treason. It could avail him nothing that he might think himself right.”

[THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION](#)

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86. It is said that [William Lloyd Garrison](#), a believer in spiritualism, once was convinced during a séance that he was communicating with the soul of Nat Turner. In an undated letter from the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) in exile in Rome to [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#) which [Julia Ward Howe](#) quotes from on page 243 of his *REMINISCENCES, 1819-1899* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1900), we find the horrific racist comment “What a pity that the map of our magnificent country should be destined to be so soon torn in two on account of the negro, that poorest of human creatures, satisfied, even in slavery, with sugar cane and a banjo.” (NOTE: Gary Wills, on page 110 of *LINCOLN AT GETTYSBURG: THE WORDS THAT REMADE AMERICA*, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1992, has termed this the Reverend’s “constricted” view of the abilities of the black race!) Mrs. Howe’s “ideal negro,” she commented, although of course not enslaved, would need to be “refined by white culture, elevated by white blood,” because when it is a matter of a “negro among negroes,” what you are dealing with inevitably is “a coarse, grinning, flat-footed, thick-skulled creature, ugly as Caliban, lazy as the laziest of brutes, chiefly ambitious to be of no use to any in the world.” The remedy would be that “He must go to school to the white race and his discipline must be long and laborious.” Even if labor were made quite compulsory for such creatures, that would be better than their just lazing around all day the way they naturally do. (We may safely presume that if a dear friend could write to Doctor Howe in such a manner and not be rebuked, and if his dear wife could hold such opinions and not be rebuked, the Doctor himself must most assuredly have himself shared such a mindset whether or not we are able to discover in his own handwriting any such recorded sentiment. Corroboration for this would be in the disinclination of the [Perkins Institute for the Blind](#), while he headed it, to provide any services at all to blind children of color.)



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December 2, Friday: The spirit of [John Brown](#), allegedly, to Governor [Henry A. Wise](#):



*First Hevan Dec 2*

*Friend Wise*

*I got here this Morning at 11 1/2 o'clock Set Peter was at the Door. he said welcom John Brown you are the first man that come here from Virginia in 20 years and I am afraid you will Be the last excep Cook and his friends*

*Youres &ca*

*John Brown*

*P.S. Write soon and send your letter By Cook as that will Be the Last canse you ever will get*


*J.B*

The Reverend [Henry Highland Garnet](#) announced at a service in New-York's Shiloh Church that henceforward "the Second day of December will be called **Martyr's Day.**"



**"There can be no redemption of sin**

**without the shedding of blood."**

We may now allow ourselves to notice what for a long time has not been awarded an adequate commentary, that for this commemorative service which coincided with the hanging of [John Brown](#) for treason, [Henry Thoreau](#), [Waldo Emerson](#), and the other "speakers" delivered nothing of their own thoughts. (A local lad named Frank Pierce would later have occasion to recall that he had helped his dad move some sort of heavy musical instrument, a piano or organ, into the hall for this occasion. ) The speakers merely took the podium in their turn to read entirely innocuous stuff out of Andrew Marvell, and out of Sir [Walter Raleigh](#), and out of Tacitus. Why were they doing this upon such an occasion? It must have been like drinking Polynesian Double Mai-Tais at a wake. Well, one reason might have been that enflamed Concord townspeople were

nearby, counting down the minutes as the traitor rode atop his own coffin out to the hanging ground,



until the traitor would swing at the stroke of noon — and as he swung, igniting a hanging effigy of the traitor. These local patriots did not want their world turned upside down, but instead, they wanted that all respect and consideration continue to be accorded to worthy people. They were not ready to begin to accord respect and consideration also to unworthy people, such as coloreds, and criminals. Such patriots constituted an obvious and unpredictable, although local and temporary, hazard. We have the testimony of one participant in this classics-reading, however, that something else, a more permanent and extensive threat, was on the minds of the participants and their audience. What if, as a result of this meeting, they were arrested by officials of the federal government and charged with high treason? In a trial, they would need to be able to defend themselves in some manner, and this would enable to defend themselves on the grounds that actually this meeting had been for the simple and straightforward and entirely innocuous purpose of reading of the classic authors. Not a word had they spoken about this traitor Brown who, coincidentally, was being hanged in another state at that hour. Well, does this make you think less of Henry David Thoreau, that such considerations would have been borne in mind under the uncertainties of the moment? How would you yourself have conducted yourself in the face of such uncertainties? You will please to note that there was all the difference in the world between defending Brown in public while he was merely an accused citizen before a court-martial panel of military officers,



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before he had been found to have committed the capital crime of treason, of having attempted by force and violence to overthrow the government of the United States of America, and defending him in public after that finding of guilt. It may well be that, in critical times, with martial law a very real possibility, one who attempts to give aid and comfort to treason is himself a traitor, and may well anticipate being treated as one. While people have begun hanging people, who can be sure where this spate of hanging is going to stop?

Friday, December 2, 1859, broke clear and summerlike over a nation solemn and awed by the grim business taking place in Virginia. Southerners put up a facade of business-as-usual, but in the free states church bells tolled morning, noon, and night from Cape Cod to Kansas. In Concord, Thoreau argued with the narrow-minded selectmen who refused to endorse the ringing and threatened to fire off the town's minute guns as a countermeasure, but in Albany the council authorized a one-hundred-gun salute in tribute to Brown and in Syracuse the great fire bell in City Hall rang mournfully all through the day.

The above, from page 500 of Mayer's ALL ON FIRE makes it sound as if Thoreau was threatening to fire off Concord's minute-guns because narrow-minded selectmen were refusing permission to knell the 1st Parish bell. No. What Thoreau recorded was that local **opponents** to the commemoration service threatened that if mourners knelled the 1st Parish bell in honor of [John Brown](#)'s passing, **they** would fire off the town's minute-guns in **celebration** of the traitor's execution.



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Upon expecting that the federal captive John Brown had probably been put to death in Charlestown, Virginia, [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) mused on how his sympathy for Brown's determined endeavor related to the qualms he had as to episodically violent manner in which Brown had conducted himself in response to the constant violence that was the institution of slavery:

*To-day at 12 M. John Brown was probably executed at Charlestown, Va., for a noble but apparently ineffectual attempt to emancipate slaves. My sympathy for the brave and self-sacrificing old man has been deeply aroused. His sufferings are now probably all over, and his body rests in peace, the bloody requisitions of the law having been satisfied.... Feeling sad at the mournful close of poor John Brown's life, now I trust with his Father and his God beyond the reach of the tyrant slaveholder. Cloudy this afternoon, and all nature affected with a general gloom, as it were at the loss of the brave old philanthropic hero now lying dead and cold in the hands of his enemies and the enemies of humanity.*

*John Brown cannot die; his body may perish, but that which was the most himself, his noble, self-sacrificing spirit, will survive, and that object to which he so heartily devoted himself and for which he has died, will be hastened to its accomplishment by his cruel and untimely death, untimely so far as the means used to effect it on the part of his tyrannical captors.*

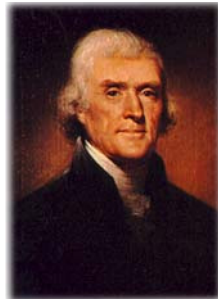
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The Reverend [Samuel Joseph May](#) organized a crowd to gather at the Syracuse NY city hall to do honor to



him who had honored in “spirit and letter the great holy doctrine of the [Declaration of Independence](#).”



The reverend termed the action “ill-advised,” condemned its violence, and then repeated the sentiment of [John Brown](#)’s closing speech at his trial — that had he acted on behalf of the rich and well-born, the government would be glorifying him rather than killing him, and that therefore the true reason why the courts martial panel was condemning him to death had nothing to do with the nature of his actions in and of themselves, and had everything to do with the fact that he had performed these actions on behalf of the humble people of this world.<sup>87</sup> When the appointed time arrived for the federal government to kill its captive, the minister intoned “The day has come, it is slavery or liberty, compromises are at an end,” and the sexton tolled the bell of the city hall 63 times.

Upon the request of [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), [Thoreau](#) borrowed [Emerson](#)’s covered wagon and mare and delivered a distressed young man at sunrise past the railroad depot in Concord to the railroad depot next down the line, in South Acton. No questions asked or answered, Thoreau simply did as his friends needed The young man sat in the back seat and talked continuously, insisted that his driver was Mr. Emerson, and at one point

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87. Which, of course, was an excellent point, and one which needed to be made.





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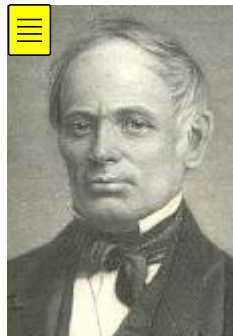
attempted to dismount and walk back to Concord. The “Mr. Lockwood” whom Thoreau escorted was [Francis Jackson Meriam](#), a young manic-depressive with but one good eye, one of the culprits of the [Harpers Ferry](#) fiasco, the last-recruited agent of the [Secret “Six”](#), and it is an open question what would have happened to Thoreau, had anyone seen through “Mr. Lockwood’s” assumed identity and had Henry been captured while assisting such an escaping “traitor.”



(Meriam had been in Boston coming from Canada, and finally had been induced by friends to head back toward the vicinity of [St. Catharines](#), Canada; he eventually would settle in Illinois and marry with Minerva Caldwell of Galena, Illinois and obtain a position as a captain in the 3rd South Carolina Colored Infantry. Erratic and unbalanced, he would often urge wild schemes upon his superiors, and sometimes attempt them. In an engagement under General Grant he would be severely wounded in the leg. In 1865 he would die suddenly in New-York.)



Then Thoreau drove back to Concord from South Acton, returned the wagon, and delivered “The Martyrdom of John Brown” at Concord Town Hall. This was the noon of Brown’s hanging and other residents of Concord, down the street, were hanging Brown in effigy.



While the condemned man was being [hanged](#), the Reverend [Adin Ballou](#) stayed at home and wrote an editorial asking “Are Non-Resistants for Murder?” He had not been much impressed with Brown’s reliance upon pikes,

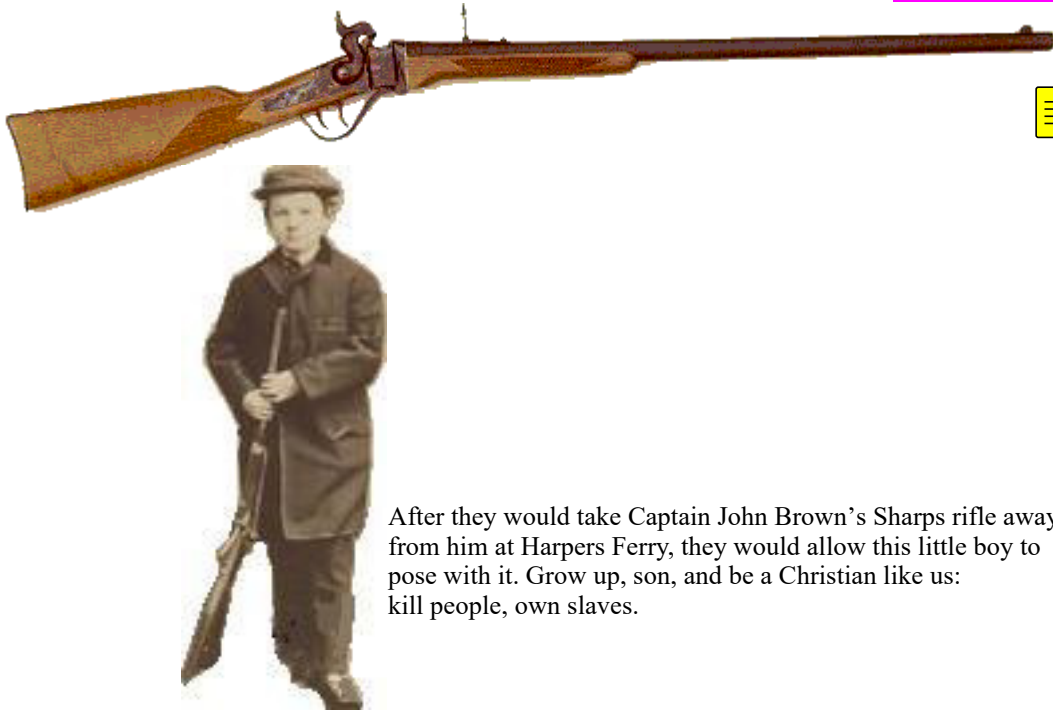
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or reliance on the readings of the “Beecher’s Bible” (Sharps rifle, ten “verses” per minute).

NON-RESISTANCE



After they would take Captain John Brown’s Sharps rifle away from him at Harpers Ferry, they would allow this little boy to pose with it. Grow up, son, and be a Christian like us: kill people, own slaves.

Down South, just before noon, as Brown was being taken from his cell to sit on his own coffin in a wagon and ride away in the midst of the troops, a guard handed him a slip of paper and a quarter, requesting an autograph. Brown wrote hurriedly on the slip of paper.<sup>88</sup>

Charlestown, Va. 2<sup>d</sup> December, 1859.  
I John Brown am now quite certain that  
the crimes of this quitty, land; will never be  
purged away; but with Blood I had as I now  
think; vainly flattered myself that without very  
much bloodshed; it might be done

We may notice in passing that what [John Brown](#) was repeating here was the idea of the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet, that Brown had himself caused to be published and distributed. In a speech to a national

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88. He handed the man back his quarter.



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black convention in 1843, the Reverend Garnet had declared that



**“There can be no redemption of sin**

**without the shedding of blood.”**

We understand how such a speech, determinedly ignoring (*à la* Robert D. Richardson, Jr.) the vast difference between shedding one’s own blood in the furtherance of one’s agenda and shedding the blood of another, could fit right into a desperate man’s desperate agenda — for Brown had printed and distributed this speech.

**Be sure you grok the logic here:  
The logic is not “A black minister said it  
and therefore we should pay attention.”  
The logic is: “They should die for their sins and set us free;  
therefore by becoming murderers we will set ourselves free.”**

Also, on December 2nd, several hundred medical students from Virginia marched through the streets of Philadelphia, with red ribbons on their coats, shouting out how many niggers they owned.

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As [John Brown](#) was being led down the corridor in the prison, he kissed the warder John Avis's young son.<sup>89</sup>



Currier & Ives would record this as the kissing of a black baby:



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89. The warder's family, a white family named Avis, lived at the front of the prison. This, plus the fact that Brown had spoken of how desirable it would be to have black people in attendance during his hanging, evidently led to the disgusting and inflammatory and utterly unfounded and unwarranted report in the popular newspapers, that the child he had kissed was **black**.

John Brown of Ossawatomie spake on his dying day:  
'I will not have to shrive my soul a priest in Slavery's pay;  
But let some poor slave-mother whom I have striven to free,  
With her children, from the gallows-stair put up a prayer for me!'  
John Brown of Ossawatomie, they led him out to die;  
And lo! a poor slave-mother with her little child pressed nigh:  
Then the bold, blue eye grew tender, and the old harsh face grew mild,  
As he stooped between the jeering ranks and kissed the negro's child!  
The shadows of his stormy life that moment fell apart,  
And they who blamed the bloody hand forgave the loving heart;  
That kiss from all its guilty means redeemed the good intent,  
And round the grisly fighter's hair the martyr's aureole bent!  
Perish with him the folly that seeks through evil good!  
Long live the generous purpose unstained with human blood!  
Not the raid of midnight terror, but the thought which underlies;  
Not the borderer's pride of daring, but the Christian's sacrifice.  
Nevermore may yon Blue Ridges the Northern rifle hear,  
Nor see the light of blazing homes flash on the negro's spear;  
But let the free-winged angel Truth their guarded passes scale,  
To teach that right is more than might, and justice more than mail!  
So vainly shall Virginia set her battle in array;  
In vain her trampling squadrons knead the winter snow with clay!  
She may strike the pouncing eagle, but she dares not harm the dove;  
And every gate she bars to Hate shall open wide to Love!

— Friend [John Greenleaf Whittier](#)

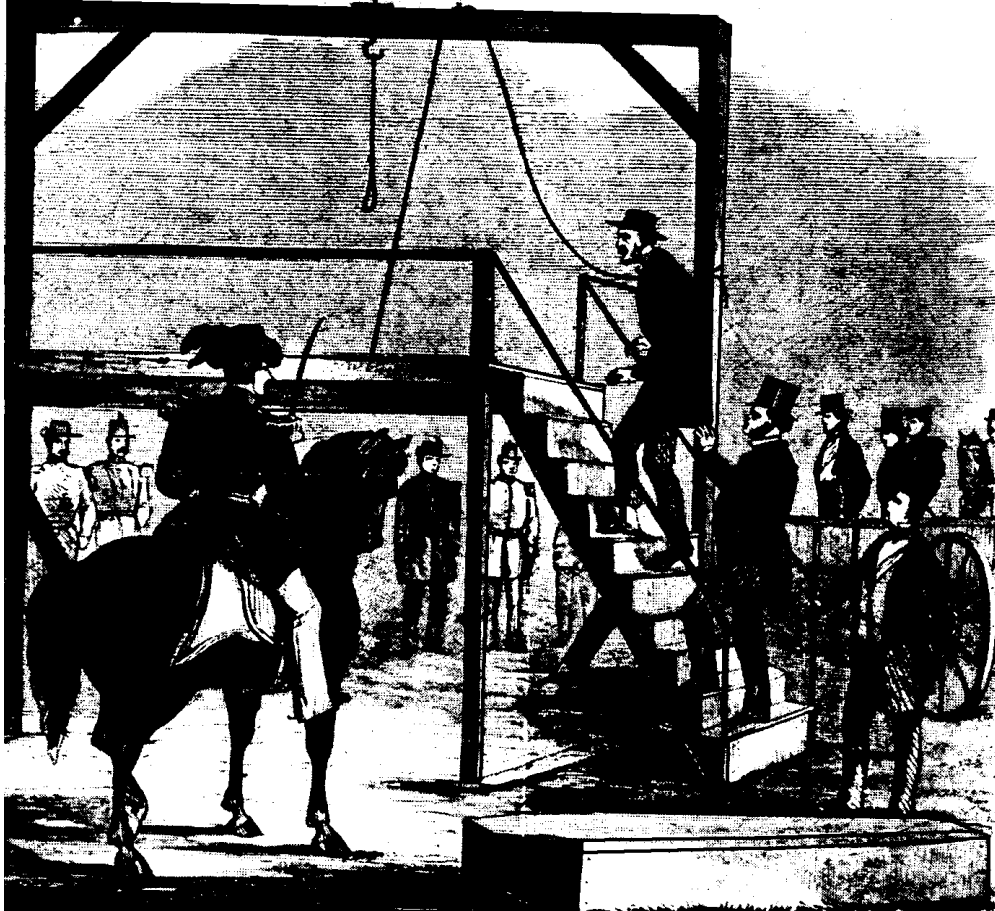
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**It was high noon on 2 Dec 1859 and time for the military ceremony.  
If anyone did, John Brown had a perfect right to dance:  
After giving the lives of a number of *other* people for what *he* believed,  
he had somewhat belatedly gotten the idea of sacrifice  
that Angelina Grimké had tried to explain in 1835:**

*It is my deep, solemn, deliberate conviction that this  
is a cause worth dying for.... YES! LET IT COME – let  
us suffer, rather than insurrections should arise.*

**—and offered his *own* life rather than *somebody else's* life for what *he* believed.  
Then the death roll of the drums of Robert E. Lee's marching band, snares  
loosened, purposefully drowned out John Brown's last words from the**

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In 1884, Thomas Hovenden would prepare a painting depicting the famous falsehood, what supposedly had



taken place at the door of the Charlestown jail while [John Brown](#) was being led to his execution, and would do at least as good a job of it as Currier & Ives had done at the time.

At least this Thomas Hovenden, by following the imagination of the Currier & Ives Sketcher, would get the backdrop for his sentimental picture reasonably accurate, for this would be the Charlestown jail as it would

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appear in the year 1900:



Assorted companies of horse soldiers went into formation about the wagon as three infantry companies were ordered to hold their regular files. A total of 1,500 troops had been amassed to take up formation in the stubble field around the scaffold. "I had no idea Governor Wise considered my execution so important," [John Brown](#) commented as he was seating himself atop his coffin in the wagon drawn by a team of white horses, in loose-fitting clothes, carpet slippers, and a hat. One of the Governor's sons was there to be a voyeur, as was a



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militiaman from Company F of Richmond, [John Wilkes Booth](#).<sup>90</sup> Virginia Military Institute cadets were in



formation behind the scaffold with the commander they called Stonewall Jackson. It was noon and time for the execution when Brown commented “This is a beautiful country — I never before had the pleasure of seeing

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90. [John Wilkes Booth](#) would lie to his sister, and then to the general public, alleging that he had rushed to [Harpers Ferry](#) to aid in suppressing the raiders. The truth was that he had merely ventured from the Richmond, Virginia stage to Charlestown, as a voyeur.

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it.”



He dropped his hat to the ground as the hood and then the noose were lowered over his head. “I can’t see, gentlemen,” he commented, “you must lead me.” When the sheriff asked him if he would like to have some kind of private signal just before the drop, he responded “It does not matter to me — I only want that everyone should not keep me waiting so long.” Then a hatchet was used to chop through the rope that was holding the



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trap door of the platform shut.

A READY RECKONER FOR HANGMEN.

*RULE.*—Take the weight of the Client in Stones and look down the column of weights until you reach the figures nearest to 24 cwt., and the figure in the left-hand column will be the Drop. See page 167 of this Handbook.

| Distance falling in feet. Zero. | 8 Stone | 9 Stone | 10 Stone | 11 Stone | 12 Stone | 13 Stone | 14 Stone | 15 Stone | 16 Stone | 17 Stone | 18 Stone | 19 Stone |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 ft.                           | 8 0 0   | 9 0 0   | 10 0 0   | 11 0 0   | 12 0 0   | 13 0 0   | 14 0 0   | 15 0 0   | 16 0 0   | 17 0 0   | 18 0 0   | 19 0 0   |
| 2 ft.                           | 15 2 1  | 16 2 3  | 17 2 4   | 18 2 5   | 19 2 6   | 20 2 7   | 21 2 8   | 22 2 9   | 23 2 10  | 24 2 11  | 25 2 12  | 26 2 13  |
| 3 ft.                           | 13 3 16 | 15 2 15 | 17 1 14  | 19 0 12  | 20 3 11  | 22 2 9   | 24 1 8   | 26 0 7   | 27 3 5   | 29 2 4   | 31 1 2   | 33 0 1   |
| 4 ft.                           | 16 0 0  | 18 0 0  | 20 0 0   | 22 0 0   | 24 0 0   | 26 0 0   | 28 0 0   | 30 0 0   | 32 0 0   | 34 0 0   | 36 0 0   | 38 0 0   |
| 5 ft.                           | 17 2 11 | 19 3 5  | 22 0 0   | 24 0 22  | 26 1 16  | 28 2 11  | 30 3 5   | 33 0 0   | 35 0 22  | 37 0 16  | 39 2 11  | 41 3 15  |
| 6 ft.                           | 19 2 11 | 22 0 5  | 24 2 0   | 26 3 22  | 29 0 16  | 31 3 11  | 34 1 5   | 36 3 0   | 39 0 22  | 41 2 16  | 44 0 11  | 46 2 5   |
| 7 ft.                           | 21 0 22 | 23 3 11 | 26 2 0   | 29 0 16  | 31 3 5   | 34 1 22  | 37 0 11  | 39 3 0   | 42 1 16  | 45 0 5   | 47 2 22  | 50 1 11  |
| 8 ft.                           | 22 2 22 | 25 2 4  | 28 1 14  | 31 0 23  | 34 0 5   | 36 3 15  | 39 2 25  | 42 2 7   | 45 1 16  | 48 0 26  | 51 0 8   | 53 3 18  |
| 9 ft.                           | 24 0 11 | 27 0 12 | 30 0 14  | 33 0 23  | 36 0 16  | 39 0 18  | 42 0 19  | 45 0 21  | 48 0 22  | 51 0 23  | 54 0 25  | 57 0 26  |
| 10 ft.                          | 25 1 5  | 28 1 23 | 31 2 14  | 34 3 4   | 37 3 22  | 41 0 12  | 44 1 2   | 47 1 21  | 50 2 11  | 53 3 1   | 56 3 19  | 60 0 9   |

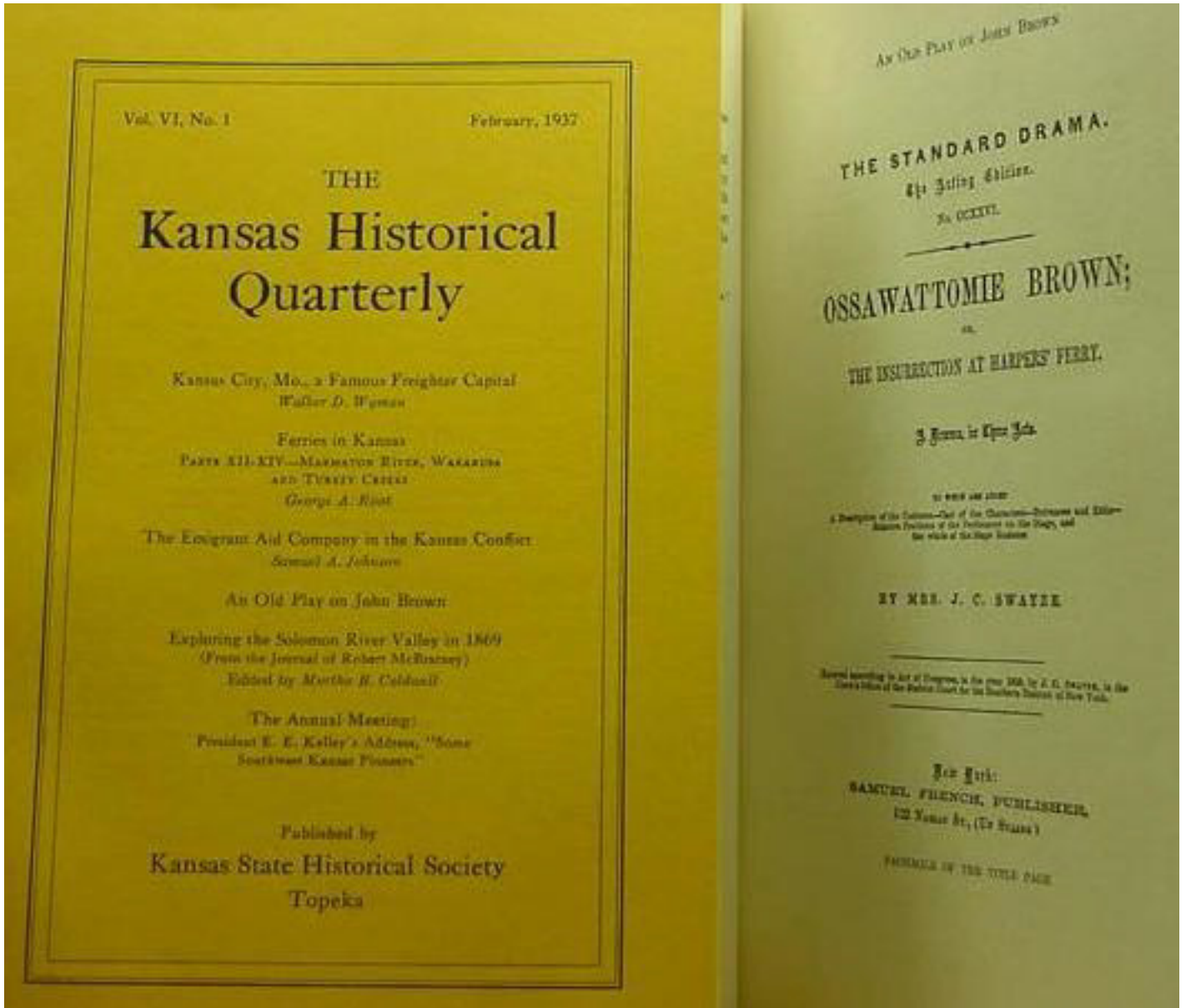
"Dislocation of the neck is the ideal aimed at ..."  
 - British Medical Journal, 1817



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This sad material would even, within this same year, become subject matter for a play by Kate Lucy Edwards, “Ossawattomie Brown, or, The Insurrection at Harpers’ Ferry,” at the Bowery Theater in New-York:<sup>91</sup> Eventually, certified hairs from Brown’s head, or, who knows, from his beard, would be being chopped



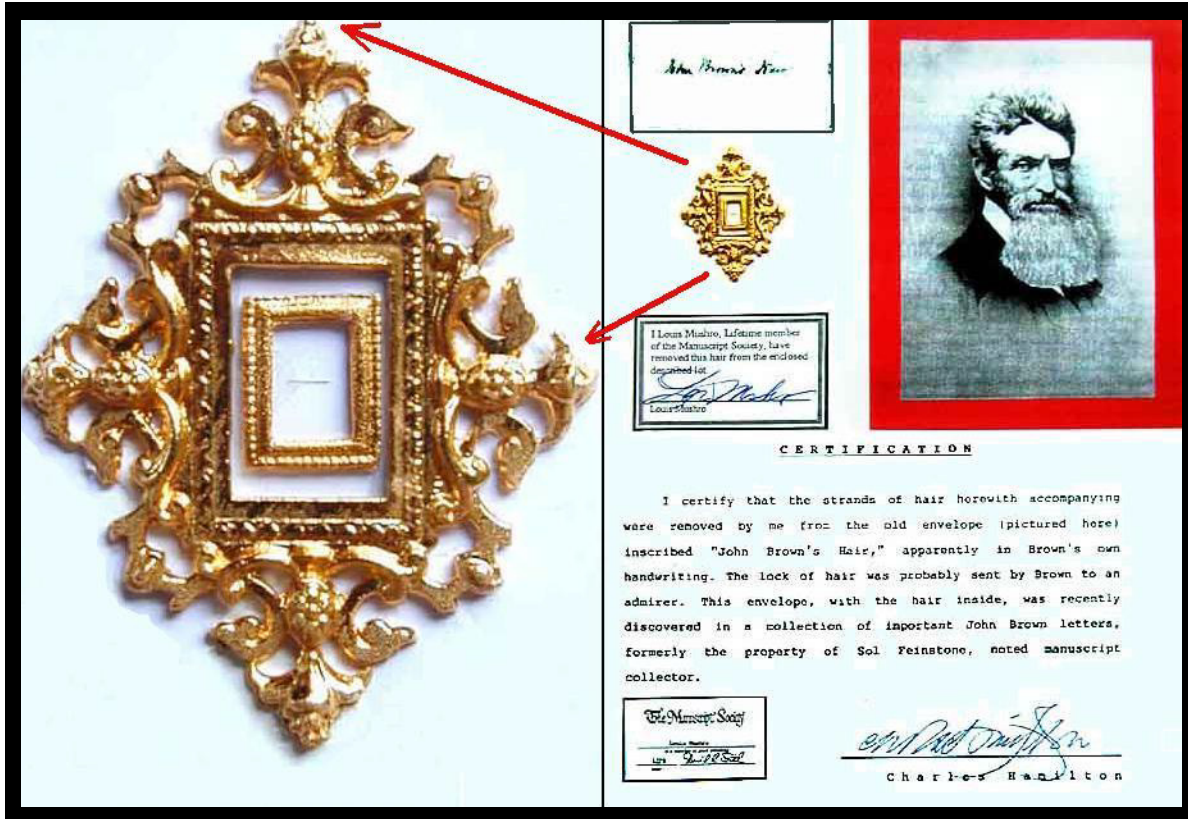
OSAWATTOMIE

91. This 3-act play would be published in the Kansas Historical Quarterly in February 1937, complete not only with the original script, but also with the cast of characters with their entrances and exits, and descriptions of their costumes.

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into pieces and offered for sale on Ebay:



There would also be an anonymous journalistic publication, reprinted here in full, bearing the title THE LIFE, TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN KNOWN AS "OLD BROWN OF OSSAWATOMIE," WITH A FULL ACCOUNT OF THE ATTEMPTED INSURRECTION AT HARPER'S FERRY. COMPILED FROM OFFICIAL AND AUTHENTIC SOURCES. INCLUDING COOKE'S CONFESSION, AND ALL THE INCIDENTS OF THE EXECUTION, printed in New-York by the Robert M. De Witt firm of 161 & 162 Nassau Street:

**READ ME**



**RACE WAR,**

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**THE  
LIFE, TRIAL AND EXECUTION  
OF  
CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN  
KNOWN AS  
“OLD BROWN OF OSSAWATOMIE,”  
WITH A FULL ACCOUNT OF THE ATTEMPTED  
INSURRECTION AT HARPER’S FERRY.**

**COMPILED FROM OFFICIAL AND AUTHENTIC SOURCES.**

**INCLUDING COOKE’S CONFESSION, AND ALL THE INCIDENTS OF  
THE EXECUTION.**

**READ ME**

**NEW YORK.  
ROBERT M. DE WITT, PUBLISHER.**

**161 & 162 NASSAU STREET.**



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## Famous Last Words:




“What school is more profitably instructive than the death-bed of the righteous, impressing the understanding with a convincing evidence, that they have not followed cunningly devised fables, but solid substantial truth.”



— A COLLECTION OF MEMORIALS CONCERNING DIVERS DECEASED MINISTERS, Philadelphia, 1787

“The death bed scenes & observations even of the best & wisest afford but a sorry picture of our humanity. Some men endeavor to live a constrained life — to subject their whole lives to their will as he who said he might give a sign if he were conscious after his head was cut off — but he gave no sign Dwell as near as possible to the channel in which your life flows.”

—Thoreau’s JOURNAL, March 12, 1853

|      |                                     |                                                                                |                                                                                                       |
|------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1851 | John James Audubon                  | shooting at sitting ducks on his estate, at age 66 despite stroke and senility | “You go down that side of Long Pond and I’ll go down this side and we’ll get the ducks!”              |
| 1852 | <a href="#">Daniel Webster</a>      | his attendant was tardy in administering some brandy                           | “I still live!”  |
| 1857 | Auguste Comte                       | he had been making himself the pope of a religion of science, “Positivism”     | “What an irreparable loss!”                                                                           |
| 1859 | John Brown                          | request                                                                        | “I am ready at any time — do not keep me waiting.”                                                    |
| 1862 | <a href="#">Henry David Thoreau</a> | he was editing manuscript                                                      | “moose ... Indian”                                                                                    |
| 1864 | General John Sedgwick               | Battle of Spotsylvania                                                         | “They couldn’t hit an elephant at this distance.”                                                     |
| 1865 | <a href="#">Abraham Lincoln</a>     | on stage, an actor ad-libbed a reference to the presence of the President      | The President laughed                                                                                 |

... other famous last words ...



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December 3, Saturday: Tuscany, Parma, Piacenza, Modena, and Reggio formed The United Provinces of Central Italy.

[Harpers Ferry](#) residents George Mauzy and Mary Mauzy wrote again to their daughter Eugenia Mauzy Burton and son-in-law James H. Burton, who were then living in England (Burton had been a machinist, foreman, and Acting Master Armorer at the Harpers Ferry Armory between 1844-1854):

To Mr. & Mrs. James H. Burton

December 3, 1859

My dear Children:

Well the great agony is over. "Old Osawatomie Brown" was executed yesterday at noon - his wife came here the day before, & paid him a short visit, after which she returned here under an escort, where she and her company remained until the body came down from Charlestown, in the evening, after which she took charge of it and went home.

This has been one of the most remarkable circumstances that ever occurred in this country, this old fanatic made no confession whatever, nor concession that he was wrong, but contended that he was right in everything he done, that he done great service to God, would not let a minister of any denomination come near or say anything to him, but what else could be expected from him, or anyone else who are imbued with "Freeloveism, Socialism, Spiritualism," and all the other isms that were ever devised by man or devil.

There is an immense concourse of military at Charlestown, not less than 2000 men are quartered there, the Courthouse, all the churches & all the Lawyers offices are occupied. We have upwards of 300 regulars & 75 or 80 Montgomery Guards. These men were all sent here by the Sec. of War & Gov. Wise to prevent a rescue of Brown & his party by northern infidels and fanatics: of which they boasted loudly, but their courage must have oozed out of their finger ends, as none made their appearance. We are keeping nightly watch, all are vigilant, partys of 10 men out every night, quite a number of incendiary fires have taken place in this vicinity & County, such as grain stacks, barns & other out-buildings. -George Mauzy



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THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION



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Upon learning that [John Brown](#) had indeed been executed, [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) continued his musing in

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his journal:



HANGING

*Learned that John Brown was hanged in Charlestown, Virginia, yesterday, between 11 and 12 A.M., - a martyr to the cause of the oppressed slave, - meeting death with the dignity and composure of a Christian martyr, as he undoubtedly was, although I do not think he took the wisest or best way to effect his noble object, - that of liberating the slaves of this professed republic. Peace to his memory. Good men will bless his name, and his memory will be venerated by the wise and good.*

*His death must prove the destruction of the blood-cemented union of this nation.*

*Mark this record, whosoever may at some future day read this page. I would make this record with due humility, and with a tender solicitude for the best interests of my countrymen. I wish not the blood of the tyrant, but that he may become abashed and conscience-stricken before God. My soul truly yearneth for peace and prosperity to all mankind, but cruelty and slavery must cease.*





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[Mary Ann Day Brown](#) would be granted the corpse of her [hanged](#) husband, but not those of her two sons.



The widow Brown would continue to bear the year of *Jubilee* as best she could.

The Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) would visit her and then write A VISIT TO JOHN BROWN'S HOUSEHOLD IN 1859, and Edmund Wilson has commented, in regard to this (page 247), that Higginson interviewed the "widow in her bleak little Adirondack farm with a piety that could not have been more reverent if Mrs. Brown had been the widow of Emerson."

On this morning [Francis Jackson Meriam](#) had come out from Boston to Concord on the train, and made an appearance on the doorstep of [Secret "Six" conspirator Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#). Sanborn wondered whether the man was being activated by a "wish for suicide," and sicked his inconvenient fugitive on his friend [Henry Thoreau](#) under the name "Mr. Lockwood." They got [Waldo Emerson](#) to rent a horse and covered wagon so Thoreau could drop him off at the train station in South Acton in the morning, where he would be less likely to be noticed as he boarded the train (toward Boston, although Sanborn was presuming toward Canada).

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Thoreau referred to Meriam in his journal as “X” and noted: “Rode with a man this forenoon who said that if



he did not clean his teeth when he got up, it made him sick all the rest of the day, but he found by late experience that when he had not cleaned his teeth for several days they cleaned themselves. I assured him that such was the general rule, —that when from any cause we were prevented from doing what we had commonly thought indispensable for us to do, things cleaned or took care of themselves. X was betrayed by his eyes, which had a glaring film over them and no serene depth into which you could look. Inquired particularly the way to Emerson’s and the distance, and when I told him, said he knew it as well as if he saw it. Wished to turn and proceed to his house. Told me one or two things which he asked me not to tell S. Said, “I know I am insane,” — and I knew it too. Also called it “nervous excitement.” At length, when I made a certain remark, he said, “I don’t know but you are Emerson; are you? You look somewhat like him.” He said as much two or three times, and added once, “But then Emerson would n’t lie.” Finally put his questions to me, of Fate, etc., etc., as if I were Emerson. Getting to the woods, I remarked upon them, and he mentioned my name, but never to the end suspected who his companion was. Then “proceeded to business,” — “since the time was short,” — and put to me the questions he was going to put to Emerson. His insanity exhibited itself chiefly by his incessant excited talk, scarcely allowing me to interrupt him, but once or twice apologizing for his behavior. What he said was for the most part connected and sensible enough.” [Francis Jackson Meriam](#) made it safely to Boston without being identified and arrested, and would be hid out for several days in the home of his namesake grandfather on Hollis Street, the Garrisonian abolitionist and Boston historian Francis Jackson.



December 3: Suddenly quite cold, and freezes in the house.

Rode with a man this forenoon who said that if he did not clean his teeth when he got up, it made him sick all the rest of the day, but he had found by late experience that when he had not cleaned his teeth for several days



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When I hear of John Brown and his wife weeping at length, it is as if the rocks sweated.

According to the Elwood Free Press for this date, this had been candidate [Abraham Lincoln](#)'s speech at Elwood in "[Bleeding Kansas](#)," a speech that must have been delivered on or about November 30th:

Mr. Lincoln was received with great enthusiasm. He stated the reasons why he was unable to make a speech this evening. He could only say a few words to us who had come out to meet him the first time he had placed his foot upon the soil of Kansas. Mr. Lincoln said that it was possible that we had local questions in regard to Railroads, Land Grants and internal improvements which were matters of deeper interest to us than the questions arising out of national politics, but of these local interests he knew nothing and should say nothing. We had, however, just adopted a State Constitution, and it was probable, that, under that Constitution, we should soon cease our Territorial existence, and come forward to take our place in the brotherhood of States, and act our parts as a member of the confederation. Kansas would be Free, but the same questions we had had here in regard to Freedom or Slavery would arise in regard to other Territories and we should have to take our part in deciding them. People often ask, "why make such a fuss about a few niggers?" I answer the question by asking what will you do to dispose of this question? The Slaves constitute one seventh of our entire population. Wherever there is an element of this magnitude in a government it will be talked about. The general feeling in regard to Slavery had changed entirely since the early days of the Republic. You may examine the debates under the Confederation, in the Convention that framed the Constitution and in the first session of Congress and you will not find a single man saying that Slavery is a good thing. They all believed it was an evil. They made the Northwest Territory—the only Territory then belonging to the government— forever free. They prohibited the African Slave trade. Having thus prevented its extension and cut off the supply, the Fathers of the Republic believed Slavery must soon disappear. There are only three clauses in the Constitution which refer to Slavery, and in neither of them is the word Slave or Slavery mentioned. The word is not used in the clause prohibiting the African Slave trade;



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it is not used in the clause which makes Slaves a basis of representation; it is not used in the clause requiring the return of fugitive Slaves. And yet in all the debates in the Convention the question was discussed and Slaves and Slavery talked about. Now why was this word kept out of that instrument and so carefully kept out that a European, be he ever so intelligent, if not familiar with our institutions, might read the Constitution over and over again and never learn that Slavery existed in the United States. The reason is this. The Framers of the Organic Law believed that the Constitution would outlast Slavery and they did not want a word there to tell future generations that Slavery had ever been legalized in America. Your Territory has had a marked history – no other Territory has ever had such a history. There had been strife and bloodshed here, both parties had been guilty of outrages; he had his opinions as to the relative guilt of the parties, but he would not say who had been most to blame. One fact was certain – there had been loss of life, destruction of property; our material interests had been retarded. Was this desirable? There is a peaceful way of settling these questions – the way adopted by government until a recent period. The bloody code has grown out of the new policy in regard to the government of Territories. Mr. Lincoln in conclusion adverted briefly to the [Harpers Ferry](#) Affair.<sup>92</sup> He believed the attack of [Brown](#) wrong for two reasons. It was a violation of law and it was, as all such attacks must be, futile as far as any effect it might have on the extinction of a great evil.

We have a means provided for the expression of our belief in regard to Slavery – it is through the ballot box – the peaceful method provided by the Constitution. John Brown has shown great courage, rare unselfishness, as even Gov. [[Henry A. Wise](#) of Virginia] testifies. But no man, North or South, can approve of violence or crime. Mr. Lincoln closed his brief speech by wishing all to go out to the election on Tuesday and to vote as became the Freemen of Kansas.

On this evening candidate [Abraham Lincoln](#) was speaking in Stockton Hall at Leavenworth, Kansas. This is how his speech would be reported in the newspaper:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: You are, as yet, the people of a Territory; but you probably soon will be the people of a State of the Union. Then you will be in possession of new privileges, and new duties will be upon you. You will have to bear a part in all that pertains to the administration of the National Government. That government, from the beginning, has had, has now, and must continue to have a policy in relation to domestic slavery. It cannot, if it would, be without a policy

---

92. October 16-18, 1859. This is apparently [Abraham Lincoln](#)'s 1st reference to [John Brown](#), whose execution scheduled for December 2, 1859, undoubtedly placed him in the forefront of conversational topics among his former friends and enemies in Kansas.



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upon that subject. And that policy must, of necessity, take one of two directions. It must deal with the institution as being wrong or as not being wrong.

Mr. Lincoln then stated, somewhat in detail, the early action of the General Government upon the question – in relation to the foreign slave trade, the basis of Federal representation, and the prohibition of slavery in the Federal territories; the Fugitive Slave clause in the Constitution, and insisted that, plainly that early policy, was based on the idea of slavery being wrong; and tolerating it so far, and only so far, as the necessity of its actual presence required. He then took up the policy of the Kansas-Nebraska act, which he argued was based on opposite ideas – that is, the idea that slavery is not wrong. He said:

You, the people of Kansas, furnish the example of the first application of this new policy. At the end of about five years, after having almost continual struggles, fire and bloodshed, over this very question, and after having framed several State Constitutions, you have, at last, secured a Free State Constitution, under which you will probably be admitted into the Union. You have, at last, at the end of all this difficulty, attained what we, in the old North-western Territory, attained without any difficulty at all. Compare, or rather contrast, the actual working of this new policy with that of the old, and say whether, after all, the old way – the way adopted by Washington and his compeers – was not the better way.

Mr. Lincoln argued that the new policy had proven false to all its promises – that its promise to the Nation was to speedily end the slavery agitation, which it had not done, but directly the contrary – that its promises to the people of the Territories was to give them greater control of their own affairs than the people of former Territories had had; while, by the actual experiment, they had had less control of their own affairs, and had been more bedeviled by outside interference than the people of any other Territory ever had.

He insisted that it was deceitful in its expressed wish to confer additional privileges upon the people; else it would have conferred upon them the privilege of choosing their own officers. That if there be any just reason why all the privileges of a State should not be conferred on the people of a Territory at once, it only could be the smallness of numbers; and that if while their number was small, they were fit to do some things, and unfit to do others, it could only be because those they were unfit to do, were the larger and more important things – that, in this case, the allowing the people of Kansas to plant their soil with slavery, and not allowing them to choose their own Governor, could only be justified on the idea that the planting a new State with slavery was a very small matter, and the





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election of Governor a very much greater matter. "Now," said he, "compare these two matters and decide which is really the greater. You have already had, I think, five Governors, and yet, although their doings, in their respective days, were of some little interest to you, it is doubtful whether you now, even remember the names of half of them. They are gone (all but the last) without leaving a trace upon your soil, or having done a single act which can, in the least degree, help or hurt you, in all the indefinite future before you. This is the size of the Governor question. Now, how is it with the slavery question? If your first settlers had so far decided in favor of slavery, as to have got five thousand slaves planted on your soil, you could, by no moral possibility, have adopted a Free State Constitution. Their owners would be influential voters among you as good men as the rest of you, and, by their greater wealth, and consequent, greater capacity, to assist the more needy, perhaps the most influential among you. You could not wish to destroy, or injuriously interfere with their property. You would not know what to do with the slaves after you had made them free. You would not wish to keep them as underlings; nor yet to elevate them to social and political equality. You could not send them away. The slave States would not let you send them there; and the free States would not let you send them there. All the rest of your property would not pay for sending them to Liberia. In one word, you could not have made a free State, if the first half of your own numbers had got five thousand slaves fixed upon the soil. You could have disposed of, not merely five, but five hundred Governors easier. There they would have stuck, in spite of you, to plague you and your children, and your children's children, indefinitely. Which is the greater, this, or the Governor question? Which could the more safely be intrusted to the first few people who settle a Territory? Is it that which, at most, can be but temporary and brief in its effects? or that which being done by the first few, can scarcely ever be undone by the succeeding many?"

He insisted that, little as was Popular Sovereignty at first, the Dred Scott decision, which is indorsed by the author of Popular Sovereignty, has reduced it to still smaller proportions, if it has not entirely crushed it out. That, in fact, all it lacks of being crushed out entirely by that decision, is the lawyer's technical distinction between decision and dictum. That the Court has already said a Territorial government cannot exclude slavery; but because they did not say it in a case where a Territorial government had tried to exclude slavery, the lawyers hold that saying of the Court to be dictum and not decision. "But," said Mr. Lincoln, "is it not certain that the Court will make a decision of it, the first time a Territorial government tries to exclude slavery?"

Mr. Lincoln argued that the doctrine of Popular Sovereignty, carried out, renews the African Slave Trade. Said he: "Who can show that one people have a better right to carry slaves to where



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they have never been, than another people have to buy slaves wherever they please, even in Africa?"

He also argued that the advocates of Popular Sovereignty, by their efforts to brutalize the negro in the public mind – denying him any share in the [Declaration of Independence](#), and comparing him to the crocodile – were beyond what avowed pro-slavery men ever do, and really did as much, or more than they, toward making the institution national and perpetual.

He said many of the Popular Sovereignty advocates were "as much opposed to slavery as any one;" but that they could never find any proper time or place to oppose it. In their view, it must not be opposed in politics, because that is agitation; nor in the pulpit, because it is not religion; nor in the Free States, because it is not there; nor in the Slave States, because it is there. These gentlemen, however, are never offended by hearing Slavery supported in any of these places. Still, they are "as much opposed to Slavery as anybody." One would suppose that it would exactly suit them if the people of the Slave States would themselves adopt emancipation; but when Frank Blair tried this last year, in Missouri, and was beaten, every one of them threw up his hat and shouted "Hurrah for the Democracy!"

Mr. Lincoln argued that those who thought Slavery right ought to unite on a policy which should deal with it as being right; that they should go for a revival of the Slave Trade; for carrying the institution everywhere, into Free States as well as Territories; and for a surrender of fugitive slaves in Canada, or war with Great Britain. Said he, "all shades of Democracy, popular sovereign as well as the rest, are fully agreed that slaves are property, and only property. If Canada now had as many horses as she has slaves belonging to Americans, I should think it just cause of war if she did not surrender them on demand.

"On the other hand, all those who believe slavery is wrong should unite on a policy, dealing with it as a wrong. They should be deluded into no deceitful contrivances, pretending indifference, but really working for that to which they are opposed." He urged this at considerable length.

He then took up some of the objections to [Republicans](#). They were accused of being sectional. He denied it. What was the proof? "Why, that they have no existence, get no votes in the South. But that depends on the South, and not on us. It is their volition, not ours; and if there be fault in it, it is primarily theirs, and remains so, unless they show that we repeal them by some wrong principle. If they attempt this, they will find us holding no principle, other than those held and acted upon by the men who gave us the government under which we live. They will find that the charge of sectionalism will not stop at us, but will extend to the very men who gave us the liberty we enjoy. But if the mere fact that we get no votes in the slave states makes us sectional, whenever we shall get votes in those states, we shall cease to be sectional; and we are sure to get votes,



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and a good many of them too, in these states next year.

You claim that you are conservative; and we are not. We deny it. What is conservatism? Preserving the old against the new. And yet you are conservative in struggling for the new, and we are destructive in trying to maintain the old. Possibly you mean you are conservative in trying to maintain the existing institution of slavery. Very well; we are not trying to destroy it. The peace of society, and the structure of our government both require that we should let it alone, and we insist on letting it alone. If I might advise my [Republican](#) friends here, I would say to them, leave your Missouri neighbors alone. Have nothing whatever to do with their slaves. Have nothing whatever to do with the white people, save in a friendly way. Drop past differences, and so conduct yourselves that if you cannot be at peace with them, the fault shall be wholly theirs.

You say we have made the question more prominent than heretofore. We deny it. It is more prominent; but we did not make it so. Despite of us, you would have a change of policy; we resist the change, and in the struggle, the greater prominence is given to the question. Who is responsible for that, you or we? If you would have the question reduced to its old proportions go back to the old policy. That will effect it.

But you are for the Union; and you greatly fear the success of the [Republicans](#) would destroy the Union. Why? Do the [Republicans](#) declare against the Union? Nothing like it. Your own statement of it is, that if the Black [Republicans](#) elect a President, you won't stand it. You will break up the Union. That will be your act, not ours. To justify it, you must show that our policy gives you just cause for such desperate action. Can you do that? When you attempt it, you will find that our policy is exactly the policy of the men who made the Union. Nothing more and nothing less. Do you really think you are justified to break up the government rather than have it administered by Washington, and other good and great men who made it, and first administered it? If you do you are very unreasonable; and more reasonable men cannot and will not submit to you. While you elect [the] President, we submit, neither breaking nor attempting to break up the Union. If we shall constitutionally elect a President, it will be our duty to see that you submit. Old [John Brown](#) has just been executed for treason against a state. We cannot object, even though he agreed with us in thinking slavery wrong. That cannot excuse violence, bloodshed, and treason. It could avail him nothing that he might think himself right. So, if constitutionally we elect a President, and therefore



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you undertake to destroy the Union, it will be our duty to deal with you as old John Brown has been dealt with. We shall try to do our duty. We hope and believe that in no section will a majority so act as to render such extreme measures necessary.

Mr. Lincoln closed by an appeal to all –opponents as well as friends– to think soberly and maturely, and never fail to cast their vote, insisting that it was not a privilege only, but a duty to do so.

December 4, Sunday: Following [John Brown](#)'s hanging, [the Reverend James Newton Gloucester](#) held memorial services at Siloam Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, [New York](#).



December 4: Awake to winter, and snow two or three inches deep, the first of any consequence.

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# NOT CIVIL WAR

December 5, Monday: In spite of the ban of March 19th, 1854, the Russian Musical Society gave its initial concert, in St. Petersburg (they avoided the ban largely by having friends in high places). Most of the music was conducted by Anton Rubinstein, who played the solo part in his own Piano Concerto no.3.

[Senator Jefferson Davis](#) arrived in Washington DC from Mississippi as the federal Congress convened.

When the 1st session of the new senate began, Senator [James Murray Mason](#) of Virginia, the senator who had written the Fugitive Slave Law, rose and announced that he was sponsoring a resolution to inquire into the gesture that had been made toward [servile insurrection](#) by the guerrillas of Captain [John Brown](#) in the shape of a raid upon the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#).

**HARPERS FERRY, FROM THE POTOMAC SIDE**



**HARPERS FERRY, FROM THE BLUE RIDGE**



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He asserted that all he wanted was the facts. Where did the money for this come from? Had they received any of their aid and comfort out of collusion from officials of the federal government? He was willing to speculate that New England would be discovered by this Select Committee on the Invasion of Harpers Ferry to have been behind this, and that its ideological foundation had been in [Hinton Rowan Helper](#)'s "vile, false, truthless" *THE IMPENDING CRISIS OF THE SOUTH: HOW TO MEET IT*, an appeal to class warfare arraying the Southern poor white trash against the rich Southern slavemasters. Fortunately, Helper had failed, for the reason that, Mason suggested, the poor white trash of Virginia actually loved and admired their state in the same way that the black slaves of Virginia loved and admired their owners. The black slaves had proved this by not joining Brown, and the poor white trash had proved this by uniting under the leadership of [Colonel Robert E. Lee](#) to capture Brown.



The Senate unanimously approved Mason's inquiry into the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy.



December 5: P.M.—Down Turnpike to Smith's Hill.

Rather hard walking in the snow. There is a slight mist in the air and accordingly some glaze on the twigs and leaves, and thus suddenly we have passed from Indian summer to winter. The perfect silence, as if the whispering and creaking earth were muffled (her axle), and the stillness (motionlessness) of the twigs and of the very weeds and withered grasses, as if they were sculptured out of marble, are striking. It is as if you had stepped from a withered garden into the yard of a sculptor or worker in marble, crowded with delicate works, rich and rare. I remark, half a mile off, a tall and slender pitch pine against the dull-gray mist, peculiarly monumental. I noticed also several small white oak trees full of leaves by the roadside, strangely interesting and beautiful. Their stiffened leaves were very long and deeply cut, and the lighter and glazed under sides being almost uniformly turned vertically toward the northwest, as a traveller turns his back to the storm, though enough of the redder and warmer sides were seen to contrast with them, it looked like an artificial tree hung with many-fingered gauntlets. Such was the disposition of the leaves, often nearly in the same plane, that it looked like a brown arbor-vitae.

See four quails running across the Turnpike. How they must be affected by this change from warm weather and



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bare ground to cold and universal snow!

Returning from the post-office at early candle-light, I noticed for the first time this season the peculiar effect of lights in offices and shops seen over the snowy streets, suggesting how withdrawn and inward the life in the former, how exposed and outward in the latter.

His late career—these six weeks, I mean—has been meteor-like, flashing through the darkness in which we live. I know of nothing more miraculous in all history.

Nothing could his enemies do but it redounded to his infinite advantage, the advantage of his cause. They did not hang him at once; they reserved him to preach to them. And here is another great blunder: they have not hung his four followers with him; that scene is still to come, and so his victory is prolonged.

No theatrical manager could have arranged things so wisely to give effect to his behavior and words. And who, think you, was the Manager? Who placed the slave-woman and her child between his prison and the gallows? The preachers, the Bible men, they who talk about principle and doing to others as you would that they should do unto you,—how could they fail to recognize him, by far the greatest preacher of them all, with the Bible on his lips, and in his acts, the embodiment of principle, who actually carried out the golden rule? All whose moral sense is aroused, who have a calling from on high to preach, have sided with him. It may prove the occasion, if it has not proved it already, of a new sect of Brownites being formed in our midst.

I see now, as he saw, that he was not to be pardoned or rescued by men. That would have been to disarm him, to restore to him a material weapon, a Sharp's rifle, when he had taken up the sword of the spirit,—the sword with which he has really won his greatest and most memorable victories. Now he has not laid aside the sword of the spirit. He is pure spirit himself, and his sword is pure spirit also.

On the day of his translation, I heard, to be sure, that he was hung, but I did not know what that meant,—and I felt no sorrow on his account; but not for a day or two did I even hear that he was dead, and not after any number of days shall I believe it. Of all the men who are said to be my contemporaries, it seems to me that John Brown is the only one who has not died. I meet him at every turn. He is more alive than ever he was. He is not confined to North Elba nor to Kansas. He is no longer working in secret only. John Brown has earned immortality.

Men have been hung in the South before for attempting to rescue slaves, and the North was not much stirred by it. Whence, then, this wonderful difference? We were not so sure of their devotion to principle. We have made a subtle distinction, have forgotten human laws, and do homage to an idea. The North is suddenly all Transcendental. It goes behind the human law, it goes behind the apparent failure, and recognizes eternal justice and glory.

It is more generous than the spirit which actuated our forefathers, for it is a revolution in behalf of another, and an oppressed, people.



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December 6, Tuesday: [Charles Lawrence Robinson](#) was elected as Kansas governor under the [Wyandotte Constitution](#).

**“BLEEDING KANSAS”**

Loaded pistols were being flourished on the floor of the House of Representatives. Here is how Peter Wallenstein has parsed the situation in his article “Incendiaries All”:

Thus it was that, while the House was debating the speakership, Senator [Alfred] Iverson of Georgia went wild. Charging Northern senators with duplicity, he noted that they “disclaim for themselves and their people any sympathy whatever with Brown and his acts and his intentions. And yet, sir, look at what is transpiring this very day in this very Capital.” By supporting John Sherman, the Republican party was “this day attempting to raise to the third office in this Government a man who has openly indorsed sentiments more incendiary in their character than anything that **John Brown** has ever uttered.”

**REPUBLICAN PARTY**



The troublesome sentiments that this Ohio congressman John Sherman of the Republican Party (pictured above) had been endorsing happen to have been those of the notorious Southern racist-abolitionist admirer of

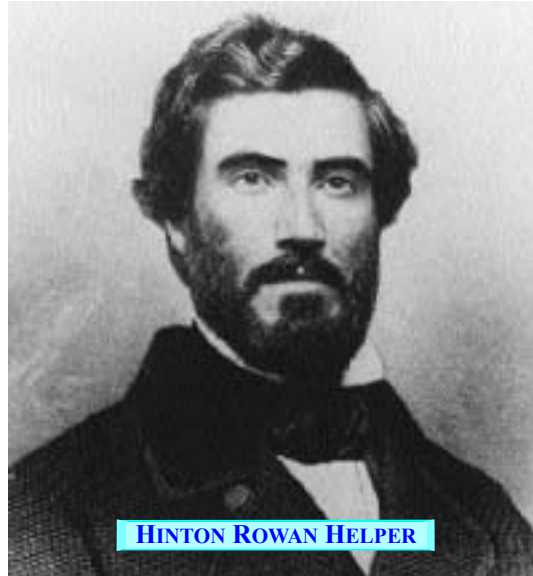




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[Waldo Emerson](#), [Hinton Rowan Helper](#).



HINTON ROWAN HELPER

In his journal, [Henry Thoreau](#) was making a distinction between the uncredentialed earnestness of the writing of [John Brown](#) and the credentialed lack of earnestness of the writing, by way of invidious contrast, of such recognized masters as [Washington Irving](#) and [Benjamin Franklin](#).<sup>93</sup>



December 6: P.M. – To Walden and Baker Bridge, in the shallow snow and mizzling rain. It is somewhat of a lichen day. The bright-yellow sulphur lichens on the walls of the Walden road look novel, as if I had not seen them for a long time. Do they not require cold as much as moisture to enliven them? What surprising forms and colors! Designed on every natural surface of rock or tree. Even stones of smaller size which make the walls are so finished, and piled up for what use? How naturally they adorn our works of art! See where the farmer has set up his post-and-rail fences along the road. The sulphur lichen has, as it were, at once leaped to occupy the northern side of each post, as in towns handbills are pasted on all bare surfaces, and the rails are more or less gilded with them as if it had rained gilt. The handbill which nature affixes to the north side of posts and trees and other surfaces. And there are the various shades of green and gray beside. Though it is melting, there is more ice left on the twigs in the woods than I had supposed. The mist is so thick that we cannot quite see the length of Walden as we descend to its eastern shore. The reflections of the hillsides are so much the more unsubstantial, for we see even the reflected mist veiling them. You see, beneath these whitened wooded hills and shore sloping to it, the dark, half mist-veiled water. For two rods in width next the shore, where the water is shallowest and the sand bare, you see a strip of light greenish two or three rods in width, and then dark brown (with a few green streaks only) where the dark sediment of ages has accumulated. And, looking down the pond, you see on each side successive wooded promontories –with their dim reflections– growing dimmer and dimmer till they are lost in the mist. The more distant shores are a mere dusky line or film, a sort of concentration of the mistiness. In the pure greenish stripe next the shore I saw some dark-brown objects above the sand, which looked very much like sea turtles in various attitudes. One appeared holding its great head up toward the surface. They were very weird-like and of indefinite size. I supposed that they were stumps or logs on the bottom, but was surprised to find that they were a thin and flat collection of sediment on the sandy bottom, like that which covered the bottom generally further out. When the breeze rippled the surface some distance out, it looked like a wave coming in, but it never got in to

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93. The importance of being earnest.



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the shore.

No sooner has the snow fallen than, in the woods, it is seen to be dotted almost everywhere with the fine seeds and scales of birches and alders, – no doubt an ever-accessible food to numerous birds and perhaps mice. Thus it is alternate snow and seeds.

Returning up the railroad, I see the great tufts of sedge in Heywood's meadow curving over like locks of the meadow's hair, above the snow.



These browned the meadow considerably. Then came a black maze, of alders moistened by the rain, which made a broad black belt between the former brown and the red-brown oaks higher up the hillside.

The white pines now, seen through the mist, the ends of their boughs drooping a little with the weight of the glaze, resemble very much hemlocks, for the extremities of their limbs always droop thus, while pines are commonly stiffly erect or ascendant.

Came upon a round bed of tansy, half a dozen feet in diameter, which was withered quite black, as seen above the snow, – blacker than any plant I remember. This reminded me that its name was by some thought to be from *ἀθάνασία*, or immortality, from its not withering early, but in this case it suggested its funeral reputation.

**JOHN BROWN**

What a transit that of his horizontal body alone, but just cut down from the gallows-tree! We read that at such a time it passed through Philadelphia, and by Saturday night had reached [New York](#). Thus like a meteor it passed through the Union from the Southern regions toward the North. No such freight have the cars borne since they carried him southward alive.<sup>94</sup>

What avail all your scholarly accomplishments and learning, compared with wisdom and manhood? To omit his other behavior, see what a work this comparatively unread and unlettered man has written within six weeks! Where is our professor of *belles-lettres*, or of logic and rhetoric, who can write so well? He has written in prison, not a History of the World like Raleigh, for his time was short, but an American book which shall live longer than that.

The death of [Irving](#), which at any other time would have attracted universal attention, having occurred while these things were transpiring, goes almost unobserved. Literary gentlemen, editors, and critics think that they know how to write because they have studied grammar and rhetoric; but the art of composition is as simple as the discharge of a bullet from a rifle, and its masterpieces imply an infinitely greater force behind it. This unlettered man's speaking and writing is standard English. Some words and phrases deemed vulgarisms and Americanisms before, he has made standard American. "*It will pay.*" It suggests that the one great rule of composition – and if I were a professor of rhetoric I should insist on this – is to *speak the truth*. This first, this second, this third. This demands earnestness and manhood chiefly.<sup>95</sup>

I felt that he, a prisoner in the midst of his enemies and under sentence of death, if consulted as to his next step, could answer more wisely than all his countrymen beside. He best understood his position; he contemplated it most calmly. All other men, North and South, were beside themselves. Our thoughts could not revert to any greater or wiser or better men with whom to compare him, for he was above them all. The man this country was about to hang was the greatest and best in it.<sup>96</sup>

Commonly men live according to a formula, and are satisfied if the order of law is observed, but in this instance they returned to original perceptions and there was a revival of old religion; and they saw that what was called order was confusion, what was called justice, injustice, that the best was deemed the worst.

Most Northern men, and not a few Southern ones, have been wonderfully stirred by Brown's behavior and words. They have seen or felt that they were great, heroic, noble, and that there has been nothing quite equal to them in this country, if in the recent history of the world. But the minority have been unmoved by them. They have only been surprised and provoked by the attitude of their neighbors. They have seen that Brown was brave and believed that he had done right, but they have not detected any further peculiarity in him. Not being accustomed to make fine distinctions or to appreciate noble sentiments, they have read his speeches and letters as if they read them not, – they have not known when they burned. They have not felt that he spoke with authority, and hence they have only remembered that the law must be executed. They remember the old formula;

94. Cape Cod, and Miscellanies, page 449; Misc., Riv. 247.

95. Cape Cod, and Miscellanies, pages 446-448; Misc., Riv. 244, 245.

96. Cape Cod, and Miscellanies, pages 441, 442; Misc., Riv. 237, 238.



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they do not hear the new revelation. The man who does not recognize in Brown's words a wisdom and nobleness, and therefore an authority, superior to our laws, is a modern Democrat. This is the test by which to try him. He is not willfully but constitutionally blind, and he is consistent with himself. Such has been his past life. In like manner he has read history and his Bible, and he accepts, or seems to accept, the last only as an established formula, and not because he has been convicted by it. You will not find kindred sentiments in his commonplace-book.<sup>97</sup>

And in these six weeks what a variety of themes he has touched on! There are words in that letter to his wife, respecting the education of his daughters, which deserve to be framed and hung over every mantelpiece in the land. Compare their earnest wisdom with that of [Poor Richard](#)!<sup>98</sup>

“He nothing common did or mean  
Upon that memorable scene,  
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.  
Nor called the gods with vulgar spite,  
To vindicate his helpless right;  
But bowed his comely head  
Down, as upon a bed.”<sup>99</sup>

Years are no longer required for a revolution of public opinion; days, nay hours, produce marked changes. Fifty who were ready to say, on going into some meeting in honor of him, that he ought to be hung, will not say it when they come out. They hear his words read, every one of which “conveys the perfect charm;” they see the earnest faces of the congregation; and perhaps they join in singing the hymn in his praise.

What confessions it has extorted from the cold and conservative! Witness the Newton letter.

The order of instruction has been reversed. I hear that the preacher says that his act was a failure, while to some extent he eulogizes the man. The class-teacher, after the services, tells his grown-up pupils that at first he thought as the preacher does now, but now he thinks that John Brown was right. But it is understood that the pupils are as much ahead of the teacher as he is ahead of the priest; and the very little boys at home ask their parents why God did not save him.

They, whether in the church or out of it, who adhere to the spirit and abandon the letter, and who are accordingly called infidel, have been foremost in this movement.<sup>100</sup>

I took out my boots, which I have not worn since last spring, with the mud and dust of spring still on them, and went forth in the snow. That is an era, when, in the beginning of the winter, you change from the shoes of summer to the boots of winter.

December 7, Wednesday: The Reverend [William Henry Furness](#) wrote from Philadelphia to Charles Wesley Slack in Boston, accepting a preaching engagement conditional upon his finding a replacement for his own pulpit.

The [Quakers](#) of [Springdale, Iowa](#), aware at this point of what [John Brown](#) and his men had been up to after they had drilled and prepared and planned in their midst, and horrified at what had happened, made haste to restate their testimony for peace. Their Monthly Meeting appointed “a large and representative committee” including Friends Joel Bean, Henry Rowntree, Israel Negus, Laurie Tatum, James Schooley, and Samuel Macy to respond to “an impression abroad that the Friends in this neighborhood have improperly encouraged a war spirit”:

We have endeavored to consider the subject confided to us in all its bearings and are united in the conclusion, that any publication (in the way of defense) on the part of the [Monthly Meeting] is unnecessary.... We believe our principals [*sic*] of

97. Cape Cod, and Miscellanies, pages 443, 444; Misc., Riv. 240, 241.

98. Cape Cod, and Miscellanies, page 447; Misc., Riv. 244, 245.

99. Cape Cod, and Miscellanies, page 449; Misc., Riv. 247.

100. Cape Cod, and Miscellanies, pages 442, 443; Misc., Riv. 238, 239.



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peace were never dearer to most of our members than now.

**THE QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONY**



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

I have been unable to find a record of the Iowa Quakers having completed a process of [Quaker disownment](#) in regard to those in their meeting who had been helping Captain John Brown and supplying him with firepower.

The United Sons of Freedom, to Governor [Henry A. Wise](#):



*St. Louis Dec. 7th 1859*

*To His Excelency*

*Gov[ernor]. H.A. Wise*

*Dear Sir*

*At a meeting of the United Sons of Freedom of St. Louis, helled at their meeting room, on the 7th Dec. it was unanimously resolved that we present you with a leather medal for the energetic manner in which you have discharged your duty, as Gov[ernor]. of the State of Virginia in the late Harper's Ferry difficulty; and rest assured that we appreciate you very much for your bravery in haveing two thousand brave sons of Virginia present at the execution of the Hero of the North, and the lover of our motto, Give us liberty or give us death*

*We feel proud to think that the lover of our motto died so noble and we shall always treasure his memory as long one of our greatest men, who loved his country better than life*

*Oh! you are a noble representative of the State of Virginia.*

*Just think you would not permit a lady to accompany Mrs. Brown to her last interview with her husband, but we trust that his spirit has arrived at that haven from whose bounds no traveler returns, when the wicked cease from trouble and the wary are at rest*

*We subscribe your humble servants*

*William Lewis, President*

*J.P. Cutler, Sec[retar]y*

Here is how Peter Wallenstein has parsed the continuing tense situation on the floor of the House



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of Representatives in his article “Incendiaries All”.<sup>101</sup>



[Representative Albert Iverson continued] to link [John Brown](#), [Hinton Rowan Helper](#), and [Congressman] [John Sherman](#) [of Ohio]. “When you say that you do not sympathize with Brown and his acts, when you say that you do not intend to interfere with slavery in the southern States, when you say that you intend to observe the constitutional rights of the southern people, you, at the same time, go to the polls banding together in political organizations, and elevate to political power the very men who inculcate these treasonable sentiments. Then, what are all your disclaimers worth?” Warming to his theme, the senator from Georgia raised the stakes. “And yet the [Republican Party](#) proposes to elevate to a high office a man who has ... attempted to circulate a pamphlet containing the most treasonable and the most insurrectionary sentiments, ... exciting insurrection and advising our slaves to fire our dwellings and put their knives to our throats.” For such a crime, Iverson noted, Brown had already been hanged, and anyone who endorsed Hinton Helper’s book should be hanged as well.



**[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR DECEMBER 7th]**

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101. This interesting book THE IMPENDING CRISIS OF THE SOUTH: HOW TO MEET IT has been republished in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1968. For more on this guy and his not-all-that-novel conceit that the black victims by their very presence were victimizing the nice white folks who were victimizing them (identical in every respect to the later [Nazi](#) attitude of outrage in regard to the German Jews they were so systematically persecuting), see Bailey, Hugh C. HINTON ROWAN HELPER: ABOLITIONIST-RACIST (University of Alabama: 1965).



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December 8, Thursday: [Boston](#) had for some 30 years been intimately entangled with the financial affairs of the South. The shipping interests had been making money by moving the cotton produced by slaves, and the manufacturing interests had been making money by spinning it into cloth. Thus as soon as [John Brown](#) was safely dead (his last words had been “I am ready at any time — do not keep me waiting....”), there was created a political organization at Faneuil Hall, euphemistically named the Constitutional Union Party, which would commonly be known by the more accurate designator “Cotton Whigs.” These folks would do everything possible to suck up on a suspicious South.

Burial of the corpse of [John Brown](#) at North Elba, New York, with a note from [Henry Thoreau](#) (now lost) read last of all at the graveside. “The face was hardly changed, and wore its usual expression.” Although I have a note asserting that Brown had requested that the Reverend [William Henry Furness](#) officiate at his funeral, I cannot find corroboration that the Reverend was present, or traveled to New York. A choir of black neighbors sang the old man’s favorite hymn:

Blow Ye the Trumpet Blow,  
The gladly solemn sound,  
Let all the nations know,  
To earth’s remotest bound,  
The year of *Jubilee* has come.

Additional corpses had been unearthed and scrutinized at [Harpers Ferry](#), and the corpse of the son [Oliver Brown](#) had been separated out to be handed over to [Mrs. Mary Ann Day Brown](#) per the letter of petition she had sent to Virginia Governor [Henry A. Wise](#). Alfred Barbour, Superintendent of the United States Armory, made his report: “Upon examination, the body of one of Mrs. Brown’s sons was recognized among the disinterred invaders. The bodies of them all have been again buried properly on the right bank of the Shenandoah in the County of Jefferson, Virginia.” This time they packed the remaining corpses tightly into a couple of “store boxes.” Francis Yates, Overseer of the Poor for Jefferson County, submitted a bill for \$55, pointing out that because “these men were killed on the property of the United States, whilst they had forcible possession of said property ... the Government, and not the Overseers ... should pay the expenses of interment.”

The widow continued to bear the year of *Jubilee* as best she could. The Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) would visit her and then write *A VISIT TO JOHN BROWN’S HOUSEHOLD IN 1859*, and Edmund Wilson has famously commented in regard to this (page 247), that Higginson interviewed the “widow in her bleak little Adirondack farm with a piety that could not have been more reverent if Mrs. Brown had been the widow of Emerson.”



[Thomas De Quincey](#) died in Edinburgh. His body would be interred beside that of Margaret in St Cuthbert’s



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Churchyard.

## ATTITUDES ON DE QUINCEY



December 8. Here is a better glaze than we have yet had, for it snowed and rained in the night. I go to Pleasant Meadow, – or rather toward the sun, for the glaze shows best so. The wind has risen and the trees are stiffly waving with a brattling sound. The birches, seen half a mile off toward the sun, are the purest dazzling white of any tree, probably because their stems are not seen at all. It is only those seen at a particular angle between us and the sun that appear thus. Day before yesterday the ice which had fallen from the twigs covered the snow beneath in oblong pieces one or two inches long, which C. well called lemon-drops. When a noble deed is done, who is likely to appreciate it? They who are noble themselves. I am not surprised that certain of my neighbors speak of John Brown as an ordinary felon. Who are they? They have much flesh, or at least much coarseness of some kind. They are not ethereal natures, or the dark qualities predominate in them, or they have much office. Several of them are decidedly pachydermatous. How can a man behold the light who has no answering inward light? They are true to their sight, but when they look this way they see nothing, they are blind. For the children of the light to contend with them is as if there should be a contest between eagles and owls. Show me a man who feels bitterly toward John Brown, and then let me hear what noble verse he can repeat. Certain persons disgraced themselves by hanging Brown in effigy in this town on the 2d. I was glad to know that the only four whose names I heard mentioned in connection with it had not been long resident here, and had done nothing to secure the respect of the town. It is not every man who can be a Christian, whatever education you give him. It is a matter of constitution and temperament. I have known many a man who pretended to be a Christian, in whom it was ridiculous, for he had no genius for it. The expression “a liberal education” originally meant one worthy of freemen. Such is education simply in a true and broad sense. But education ordinarily so called –the learning of trades and professions which is designed to enable men to earn their living, or to fit them for a particular station in life– is servile. Two hundred years ago is about as great an antiquity as we can comprehend or often have to deal with. It is nearly as good as two thousand to our imaginations. It carries us back to the days of aborigines and the Pilgrims; beyond the limits of oral testimony, to history which begins already to be enamelled with a gloss of fable, and we do not quite believe what we read; to a strange style of writing and spelling and of expression; to those ancestors whose names we do not know, and to whom we are related only as we are to the race generally. It is the age of our very oldest houses and cultivated trees. Nor is New England very peculiar in this. In England also, a house two hundred years old, especially if it be a wooden one, is pointed out as an interesting relic of the past. When we read the history of the world, centuries look cheap to us and we find that we had doubted if the hundred years preceding the life of [Herodotus](#) seemed as great an antiquity to him as a hundred years does to us. We are inclined to think of all Romans who lived within five hundred years B.C. as contemporaries to each other. Yet Time moved at the same deliberate pace then as now. Pliny the Elder, who died in the 79th year of the Christian era, speaking of the paper made of papyrus which was then used, –how carefully it was made,– says, just as we might say, as if it were something remarkable: “There are, thus, ancient memorials in the handwriting of Caius and Tiberius Gracchus, almost two hundred years old, which I have seen in the possession of Pomponius Secundus the poet, a very illustrious citizen. As for the handwriting of Cicero, Augustus, and Virgil, we very often meet with it still.” This too, according to Pliny, was the age of the oldest wines. “In one year the quality of all kinds of wine was peculiarly good. In the consulship of Lucius Opimius, when Caius Gracchus, disturbing the people with seditions, was killed, there was that bright and serene weather (ea caeli temperies fulsit) which they call a cooking (of the grape) by the heat of the sun. This was in the year of the city 634. And some of those wines have lasted to this day, almost two hundred years, now reduced to the appearance of candied honey (in speciem redacta mellis asperi).” [[Bohn's](#) translation says, “have assumed the consistency of honey with a rough taste!!”]

How is it that what is actually present and transpiring is commonly perceived by the common sense and understanding only, is bare and bald, without halo or the blue enamel of intervening air? But let it be past or to come, and it is at once idealized. As the man dead is spiritualized, so the fact remembered is idealized. It is a deed ripe and with the bloom on it. It is not simply the understanding now, but the imagination, that takes cognizance of it. The imagination requires a long range. It is the faculty of the poet to see present things as if,





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in this sense, also past and future, as if distant or universally significant. We do not know poets, heroes, and saints for our contemporaries, but we locate them in some far-off vale, and, the greater and better, the further off we [ARE] accustomed to consider them. We believe in spirits, we believe in beauty, but not now and here. They have their abode in the remote past or in the future.

December 9, Friday: Page 5 of The New York Evening Post carried an article “Unique Celebration of [John Brown](#)’s Death: [R.W. Emerson](#), Thoreau, and Others Taking Part”:

Among the meetings held to commemorate the death of John Brown one of the most unique, and, at the same time, most appropriate, was that held at Concord, in this state.

There had been an opening prayer and hymn, after which:

Mr. H.D. Thoreau advanced and made a brief address....



This article went on to quote extensively from [Henry Thoreau](#)’s remarks.



December 9. Suddenly cold last night. The river and Fair Haven Pond froze over generally (I see no opening as I walk) last night, though they were only frozen along the edges yesterday. This is unusually sudden. How prominent the late or fall flowers are, now withered above the snow, – the goldenrods and asters, Roman wormwood, etc., etc.! These late ones have a sort of life extended into winter, hung with icy jewelry.

I observe at mid-afternoon, the air being very quiet and serene, that peculiarly softened western sky, which perhaps is seen commonly after the first snow has covered the earth. There are many whitish filmy clouds a third of the way to the zenith, generally long and narrow, parallel with the horizon, with indistinct edges, alternating with the blue. And there is just enough invisible vapor, perhaps from the snow, to soften the blue, giving it a slight greenish tinge. Thus, methinks, it often happens that as the weather is harder the sky seems softer. It is not a cold, hard, glittering sky, but a warm, soft, filmy one.

The prosaic man sees things baldly, or with the bodily sense; but the poet sees them clad in beauty, with the spiritual sense.

Editors are still pretty generally saying that Brown’s was a “crazy scheme,” and their one only evidence and proof of it is that it cost him his life. I have no doubt that, if he had gone with five thousand men, liberated a thousand slaves, killed a hundred or two slaveholders, and had as many more killed on his own side, but not lost his own life, such would have been prepared to call it by another name. Yet he has been far more successful than that. They seem to know nothing about living or dying for a principle.

Abel Brooks told me this anecdote on the 28th ult.:-

“I don’t know as you remember Langley Brown. Dr. Ripley asked him to bring him a load of the best oak wood he could get. So Langley he picked out a first-rate load of white oak, and teamed it to his door. But when the doctor saw it he said at once that it wouldn’t do, he didn’t want any such stuff as that. Langley next picked out a load of yellow oak and carried that to the doctor; but the latter answered, as quickly as before, that that was not what he wanted at all. Then Langley selected a load of red oak, very straight and smooth, and carted that to the doctor’s, and the moment he saw it he exclaimed, ‘Ah, that’s what I want, Mr. Brown!’”

December 10, Saturday: The 11st governor of Queensland, Sir George Ferguson Bowen, arrived in Brisbane, Australia and proclaimed the new colony to be separate from New South Wales.

The Reverend [Adin Ballou](#) cautioned, in an issue of the Practical Christian, that to laud [John Brown](#) the “military adventurer” as a “self-sacrificing redeemer” on the model of Jesus would be “untruthful, unjust, and utterly absurd.”



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December 10. Get in my boat, in the snow. The bottom is coated with a glaze.

December 10, Saturday: From his cell in Charles Town, [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#), who had remained entirely silent throughout his trial, wrote to his brother:

Charlestown, Va.

Dec. 10, 1859:

MY DEAR BROTHER:—

I now take my pen to write you a few lines to let you know how I am, and in answer to your kind letter of the 5th instant. Dear Brother, I am, it is true, so situated at present as scarcely to know how to commence writing; not that my mind is filled with fear or that it has become shattered in view of my near approach to death. Not that I am terrified by the gallows which I see staring me in the face, and upon which I am so soon to stand and suffer death for doing what George Washington, the so-called father of his great but slavery-cursed country, was made a hero for doing, while he lived, and when dead his name was immortalized, and his great and noble deeds in behalf of freedom taught by parents to their children. And now, brother, for having lent my [faith?] to a General no less brave, and engaged in a cause no less honorable and glorious, I am to suffer death. Washington entered the field to fight for the freedom of the American people— not for the white men alone, but for both black and white. Nor were they white men alone who fought for the freedom of this country. The blood of black men flowed as freely as that of white men. Yes, the very first blood that was spilt was that of a negro. It was the blood of that heroic man, (though black he was,) Crispus Attucks. And some of the very last blood shed was that of black men. To the truth of this, history, though prejudiced is compelled to attest. It is true that black men did an equal share of the fighting for American Independence, and they were assured by the whites that they should share equal benefits for so doing. But after having performed their part honorably, they were by the whites most treacherously deceived— they refusing to fulfill their part of the contract. But this you know as well as I do, and I will therefore make no more in reference to the claims which we, as colored men, have on the American people. It was a sense of the wrongs which we have suffered that prompted the noble but unfortunate Captain Brown and his associates to attempt to give freedom to a small number, at least of those who are now held by cruel and unusual laws, and by no less cruel and unjust men. To this freedom they were entitled by every known principal of justice and humanity, and for the enjoyment of it God created them. And how dear brother, could I die in a more noble cause? Could I, brother die in a manner and for a cause which would induce true and honest men more to honor me and angels more readily to receive me to their happy home of everlasting joy above? I imagine that I hear you and all of you mother, father, sisters and brothers, say— "No there is not a cause for which we with less sorrow, could see



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*you die." Believe me when I tell you, that though shut up in prison and under sentence of death, I have spent some very happy hours here. And were it not that I know that the heart of those to whom I am attached by the nearest and most endearing ties of blood relationship- yea, by the closest and strongest ties that God has instituted- will be filled with sorrow, I would almost as [unintelligible] die now as at any time, for I feel that I am now prepared to meet my Maker. Dear brother, I want you and all of you to meet me in Heaven. Prepare your soul for death. Be ready to meet your God at any moment, and then, though we meet no more on earth, we shall meet in Heaven where parting is no more. Dear William and Fred, be good boys- mind your mother and father- love and honor them- grow up to be good men, and feat the Lord your God. Now, I want you, dear brothers, to take this advice and follow it; remember, it comes from your own brother, and is written under most peculiar circumstances. Remember it is my dying advice to you, and I hope you will, from that love you have for me, receive it. You may think I have been treated very harshly since I have been here, but it is not so. I have been treated exceedingly well- far better than I expected to be. My jailor is a most kind-hearted man, and has done all he could, consistent with duty, to make me and the rest of the prisoners comfortable. Capt. John Avis is a gentle man who has a heart in his bosom as brave as any other. He met us at the Ferry and fought us as a brave man would do. But since we have been in his power has protected us from insults and abuse which cowards would have heaped upon us. He has done as a brave man and gentleman only would do. Also one of his aids, Mr. John Sheats, has been very kind to us and has done all he could to serve us. And now, Henry, if fortune should ever throw either of them in your way, and you can confer the least favor on them, do it for my sake. Give my love to all my family, and now my dear brothers, one and all, I pray to God we may meet in Heaven. Good bye. I am now, and shall remain, your affectionate brother,*



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*John Copeland*

**OBERLIN COLLEGE**



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A depiction of “Emperor” [Shields Green](#) appeared in Leslie’s Weekly:



During the specific uproar over the [John Brown](#) raid on [Harpers Ferry](#), a public crisis of sorts had broken out in our general discussions about how to achieve progress in our nation. This public crisis had to do with the materials contained in [Hinton Rowan Helper](#)’s polemical compilation of census data published in Baltimore in 1857, titled THE IMPENDING CRISIS OF THE SOUTH: HOW TO MEET IT. This admirer of the thought processes of [Waldo Emerson](#) was an egregious case of what we might term an Antislavery Racist. —Which is to say, he was a Southern white man, from North Carolina, who owned no slaves, whose fixation was that of the victim. It wasn’t the blacks who were being harmed by slavery, it was real decent folks like him who were being harmed by slavery. All these slaves, who belonged to other people, were impacting his life! He hated the nigger who was doing him wrong, He hated the slavemaster who was doing him wrong. What he needed most urgently was a lily-white, pure America of which he could be proud, where he could stand tall. Slavery was a tainted and archaic social system that was standing in the way of white people’s cultural and material progress. Blacks were a tainted and inferior group who had no business being here in our New World in the first place.<sup>102</sup>

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102. This interesting book has been republished in Cambridge MA in 1968. For more on this guy and his not-all-that-novel conceit that the victims were victimizing him and needed to be trumped, see Bailey, Hugh C. HINTON ROWAN HELPER: ABOLITIONIST-RACIST (University AL: 1965).



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"History, among its many ironies, often places enemies in life into various positions of posthumous conjunction."



– Stephen Jay Gould

Here is how Peter Wallenstein has parsed the situation in his article "Incendiaries All":



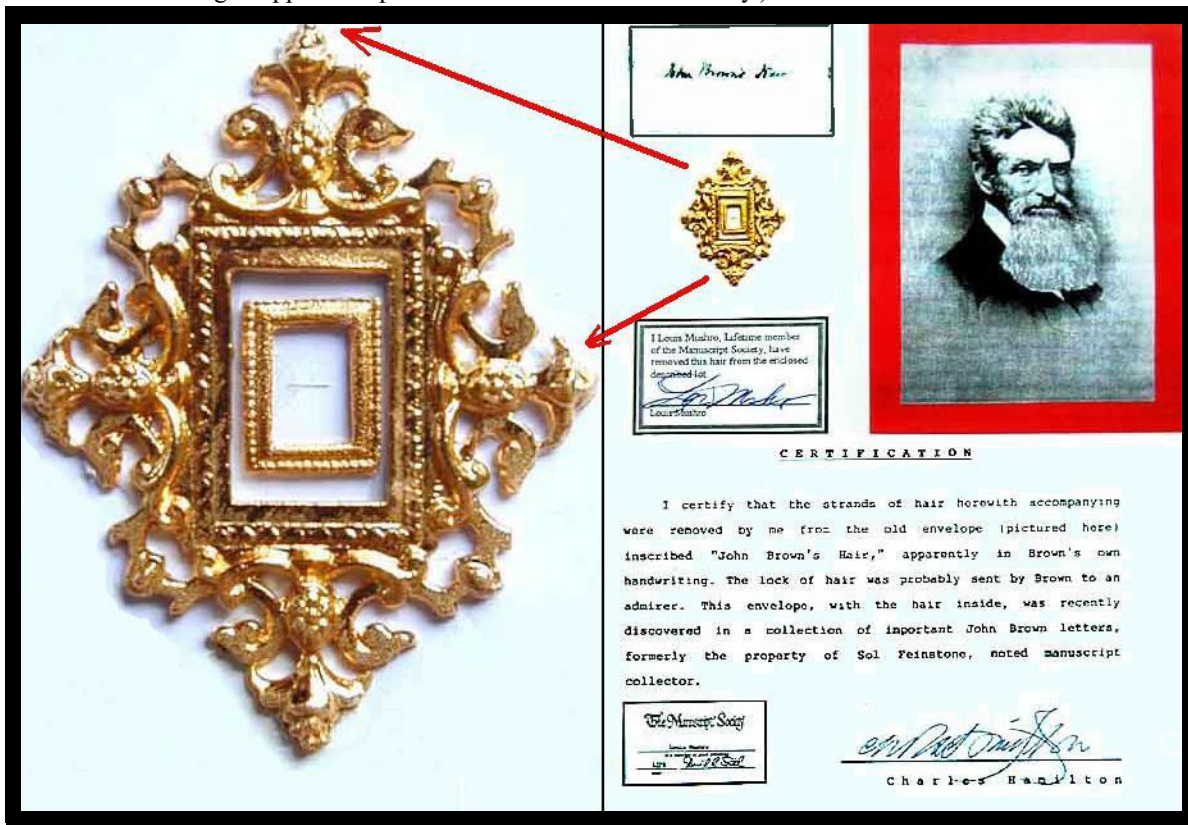
Different as they were, then, THE IMPENDING CRISIS and Harpers Ferry brought similar messages to proslavery Southerners. Regardless of whether either Brown or Helper in fact spoke for mainstream Northern public opinion, each appeared to garner widespread approval across the North, and each had declared war on slavery in the South. Each represented, at least in part, the dreaded triple threat against slavery – from nonslaveholding whites in the South, from the slaves themselves, and from outside forces. Each, too, pointed up the need and offered the opportunity to unify white Southerners against all such threats, an observation that could come from a variety of perspectives. Thus, as a letter from one Southern slaveholder [a Southern Whig, to Congressman John Sherman] put the matter in December [10] 1859, "John Brown and Helper may do more to build up the Democratic party than anything that has happened for years."

December 12, Monday: Alyeksandr Borodin arrived in Paris for a 2-week stay.

When the Victoria Bridge opened over the St. Lawrence River on this day, the rail link was complete all the way from Montréal to the seaport of Portland, Maine.

George William Curtis lectured in Rochester, New York that “John Brown was not buried but planted. He will spring up hundredfold.”

(Curtis was right, of course. Eventually, certified hairs from Brown’s head, or, who knows, from his beard, would be being chopped into pieces and offered for sale on Ebay.)



THE MARKET FOR HUMAN BODY PARTS



December 12. P. M.—To Pine Hill and round Walden.

Seeing a little hole in the side of a dead white birch, about six feet from the ground, I broke it off and found it to be made where a rotten limb had broken off. The hole was about an inch over and was of quite irregular and probably natural outline, and, within, the rotten wood had been removed to the depth of two or three inches, and on one side of this cavity, under the hole, was quite a pile of bird-droppings. The diameter of the birch was little more than two inches,—if at all. Probably it was the roosting-place of a chickadee. The bottom was an irregular surface of the rotten wood, and there was nothing like a nest.

There is a certain Irish woodchopper who, when I come across him at his work in the woods in the winter, never fails to ask me what time it is, as if he were in haste to take his dinner-pail and go home. This is not as it should be. Every man, and the woodchopper among the rest, should love his work as much as the poet does his. All



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good political arrangements proceed on this supposition. If labor mainly, or to any considerable degree, serves the purpose of a police, to keep men out of mischief, it indicates a rottenness at the foundation of our community.

The night comes on early these days, and I soon see the pine tree tops distinctly outlined against the dun (or amber) but cold western sky.

The snow having come, we see where is the path of the partridge,—his comings and goings from copse to copse,—and now first, as it were, we have the fox for our nightly neighbor, and countless tiny deer mice. So, perchance, if a still finer substance should fall from heaven (iodine?), something delicate enough to receive the trace of their footsteps, we should see where unsuspected spirits and faery visitors had hourly crossed our steps, had held conventions and transacted their affairs in our midst. No doubt such subtle spirits transact their affairs in our midst, and we may perhaps invent some sufficiently delicate surface to catch the impression of them.

If in the winter there are fewer men in the fields and woods,—as in the country generally,—you see the tracks of those who had preceded you, and so are more reminded of them than in summer.

As I talked with the woodchopper who had just cleared the top of Emerson's I got a new view of the mountains over his pile of wood in the foreground. They were very grand in their snowy mantle, which had a slight tinge of purple. But when afterward I looked at them from a higher hill, where there was no wood-pile in the foreground, they affected me less. It is now that these mountains, in color as well as form, most resemble the clouds.

I am inclined to think of late that as much depends on the state of the bowels as of the stars. As are your bowels, so are the stars.

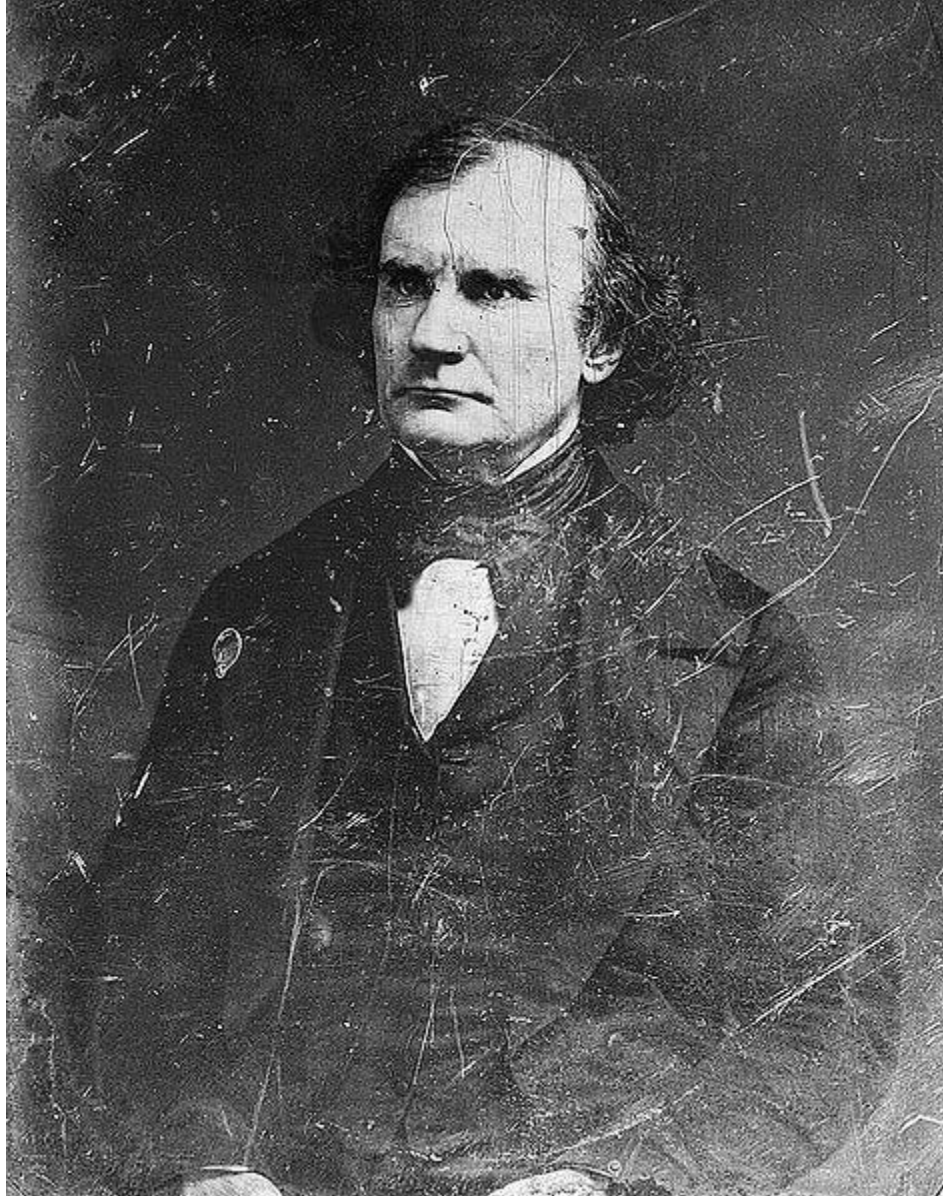




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December 14, Wednesday: Democratic Senator [James Murray Mason](#) of Virginia became the chair of the senatorial investigatory Select Committee on the Invasion of [Harpers Ferry](#) that he had sponsored, which was charged to look into the circumstances surrounding the raid made by the guerrillas of [John Brown](#) on the federal arsenal.

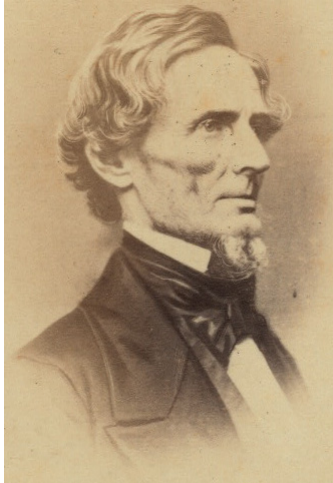




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Democratic Senator [Jefferson Davis](#) of Mississippi became its principal investigator.



A 3d Democrat, Indiana's Senator Graham N. Fitch, would ensure that the Democrats always had the majority on this committee. Two Republicans were added, Wisconsin's Senator James R. Doolittle and Vermont's Senator Jacob Collamer, so that the committee would have a dominated minority. The committee would summon, in all, 32 witnesses in this investigation of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy.

At the Concord Lyceum, [Caroline H. Dall](#) spoke on the topic "Lives of Noted Women," focusing attention on woman's claim to education as illustrated in the cases of [Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin](#) and [Margaret Fuller](#). Both [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Waldo Emerson](#) attended.<sup>103</sup>

Wednesday - Concord. Mass. Dec. 14. 1859. I took the Omnibus a little before 7 AM. & rode to the Fitchburg depot. At the Concord depot Mr Brown & his wife<sup>104</sup> & Mr Surette<sup>105</sup> met me. Mrs Brown kindly carried me to Mrs Alcott's where I passed a pleasant morning, talking to her and the girls,<sup>106</sup> and deciding which lecture I would read. After a vegetable dinner, I went back to Mrs Brown's in her sleigh. The sewing circle took tea there, and having done the agreeable as well as I could, I dressed and was taken down to the Town Hall where I was to speak. A heavy snow storm had increased since morning to a drifting gale. The driving cold was so painful on my cheeks, that I was faint & dizzy with the reaction. Mr Brown, said, You need not expect anybody tonight - but there were about four hundred persons. Mr Reynolds<sup>107</sup> who introduced me, Mr Alcott, Thoreau Frank Sanborn,<sup>108</sup> Mrs Emerson & others, paid me compliments with that

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103. Bronson Alcott would jot in his diary "Hear Mrs. Dall's lecture. She gave us accounts of the principal incidents in the lives of Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Martineau, Lady Morgan, Mrs. Jameson, Margaret Fuller & others. It was a well considered performance, and gave pleasure to our people generally."

104. Simon Brown and Ann Brown, friends of [Caroline H. Dall](#)'s from her year in Washington and Georgetown.

105. Concord merchant and member of Corinthian Lodge of Masons of Concord, [Louis A. Surette](#) (1819-1897).

106. Abigail May Alcott, the future "Marmee" of Little Women, and her surviving three daughters, Anna Bronson Alcott, Louisa May Alcott, and Abby May Alcott.

107. Grindall Reynolds (1822-1894) was minister to the Unitarian Church in Concord, 1858-1894 (pastor emeritus after 1881) and secretary of the American Unitarian Association, 1881-1894.



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dignified reserve that such persons do. But Edith Emerson<sup>109</sup> said a few words to Mrs Brown, worth them all. "I cannot often keep awake," she said, "during the best lectures, but I heard every word of this, she was so *earnest*."



December 14. At 2 P. M. begins to snow again. I walk to Walden.

Snow-storms might be classified. This is a fine, dry snow, drifting nearly horizontally from the north, so that it is quite blinding to face, almost as much so as sand. It is cold also. It is drifting but not accumulating fast. I can see the woods about a quarter of a mile distant through it. That of the 11th was a still storm, of large flakes falling gently in the quiet air, like so many white feathers descending in different directions when seen against a wood-side,—the regular snow-storm such as is painted. A myriad falling flakes weaving a coarse garment by which the eye is amused. The snow was a little moist and the weather rather mild. Also I remember the perfectly crystalline or star snows, when each flake is a perfect six (?) -rayed wheel. This must be the chef-d'oeuvre of the Genius of the storm. Also there is the pellet or shot snow, which consists of little dry spherical pellets the size of robin-shot. This, I think, belongs to cold weather. Probably never have much of it. Also there is sleet, which is half snow, half rain.

The *Juncus tenuis*, with its conspicuous acheniums, is very noticeable now, rising above the snow in the wood-paths, commonly aslant.

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108. Franklin Benjamin Sanborn.

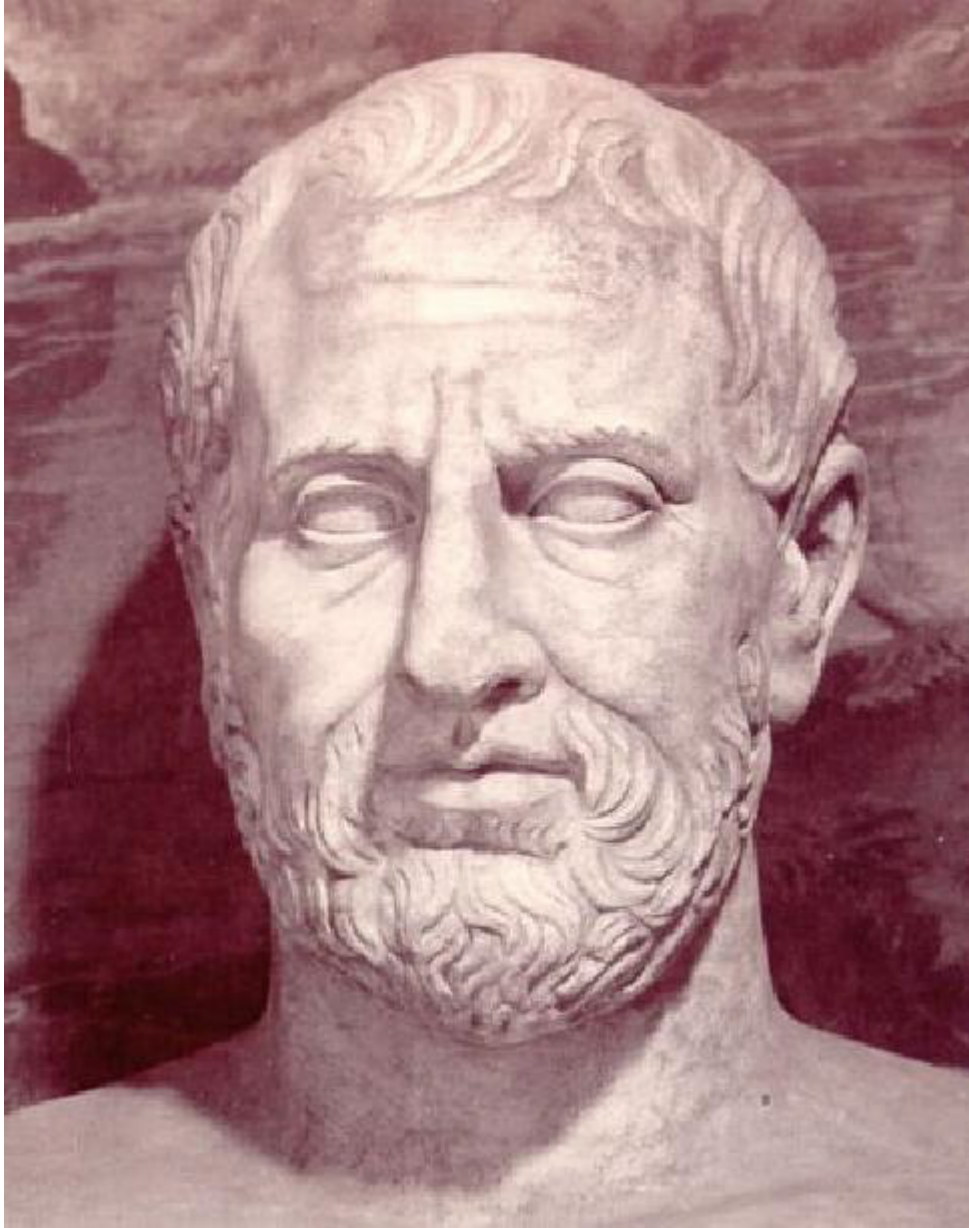
109. Edith Emerson (1841-1929) married in 1865 William H. Forbes.

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December 16, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), the 2d volume of a 5-volume set prepared 1818-1821 (*THEOPHRASTI ERESII QVAE SUPERSUNT OPERA: ET EXCERPTA LIBRORUM* by [Theophrastus of Eresus](#) (circa 372-circa 287BCE), JOHANN GOTTLLOB SCHNEIDER, HEINRICH FRIEDRICH LINK. Lipsiae: Sumtibus Frid. Christ. Guil. Vogelii) of ΘΕΟΠΗΡΑΣΤΥΣ ΕΡΕΣΙΩΝ ΤΑ ΣΟΟΛΟΜΕΝΑ.



**THEOPHRASTUS**

He also checked out the two volumes of [Aristotle](#)'s *HISTOIRE DES ANIMAUX D'ARISTOTE* in Greek and in the

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French translation by M. Camus (Paris: Chez la veuve Desaint, 1783).



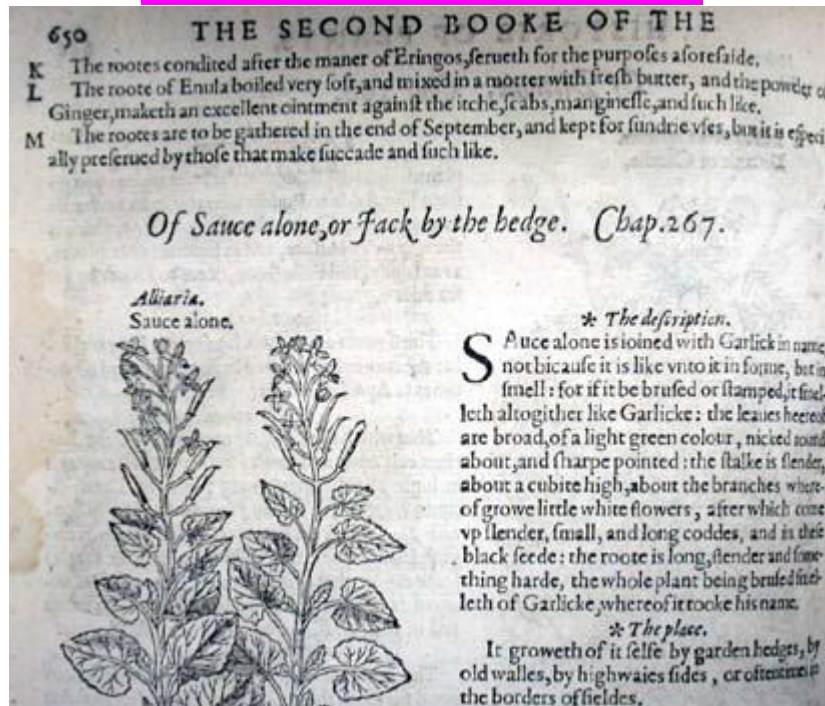
**HISTOIRE DES ANIMAUX I**

**HISTOIRE DES ANIMAUX II**

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While at the [Harvard Library](#), [Thoreau](#) read from but did not check out [John Gerard](#)'s 1597 [botanical](#) resource, THE HERBALL OR GENERALL HISTORIE OF PLANTES:

## GREAT HERBALL OF 1597



## INTERNET COMMENTARY



December 16, 1859: A.M.—To Cambridge, where I read in [Gerard](#)'s Herbal. [Vide extracts from preface made in October 1859.] His admirable though quaint descriptions are, to my mind, greatly superior to the modern more scientific ones. He describes not according to rule but to his natural delight in the plants. He brings them vividly before you, as one who has seen and delighted in them. It is almost as good as to see the plants themselves. It suggests that we cannot too often get rid of the barren assumption that is in our science. His leaves are leaves; his flowers, flowers; his fruit, fruit. They are green and colored and fragrant. It is a man's knowledge added to a child's delight. Modern botanical descriptions approach ever nearer to the dryness of an algebraic formula, as if  $c + y$  were = to a love-letter. It is the keen joy and discrimination of the child who has just seen a flower for the first time and comes running in with it to its friends. How much better to describe your object in fresh English words rather than in these conventional Latinisms! He has really seen, and smelt, and tasted, and reports his sensations.

Bought a book at Little & Brown's, paying a nine-pence more on a volume than it was offered me for elsewhere. The customer thus pays for the more elegant style of the store.

BOTANY



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The Select Committee on the Invasion of [Harpers Ferry](#) created by Democratic Senator [James Murray Mason](#) of Virginia held its first meeting in regard to the [John Brown](#) affair and its [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy. The committee would be in existence for six months before delivering its final report and would summon, in all, 32 witnesses.

[Edwin Coppoc](#) and [John E. Cook](#) were [hanged](#) in Charlestown, Virginia.<sup>110</sup> Edwin's body would be buried in

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110. I have been advised that according to THE QUAKERS OF IOWA by Louis Thomas Jones, a scholarly work published under the auspices of the State Historical Iowa at Iowa City, Iowa in 1914 (I haven't myself actually seen this book), prior to their deaths the Coppoc brothers were disowned by the Red Cedar Monthly Meeting of Friends in the West Branch/Springdale area.

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Winona after a funeral attended by the entire town. Later his body would be reburied in Salem, Ohio.



(Edwin had written from the prison to his adoptive mother, of a nonresistant-abolitionist [Quaker](#) farm family, that he was

*“sorry to say that I was ever induced to raise a gun.”*





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**NOT CIVIL WAR**

Edwin's brother [Barclay Coppoc](#) was still eluding capture.)

[John E. Cook](#) had made a full confession of his activities with the raiders and at the last moment had sought to save his neck by representing that he had been deceived through false promises, but this had not saved him, nor had the fact that his brother-in-law A.P. Willard was Governor of Indiana.

When it came the turn of [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#) to be [hanged](#), too short a drop was used. He strangled slowly.



Just before being taken from his cell to the execution field that morning, he had completed a last letter to his family:

*Charlestown Jail, Va.,  
Dec. 16, '59*

*Dear Father, Mother, Brothers Henry, William and Freddy, and  
Sisters Sarah and Mary:*

*The last Sabbath with me on earth has passed away. The last  
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday that I shall ever see  
on this earth have now passed by God's glorious sun, which he  
has placed in the heavens to illuminate this earth- whose  
refulgent beams are watched for by this poor invalid, to enter  
& make as it were in heaven of the room in which he is confined-  
I have seen declining behind the western mountains for the last  
time. Last night for the last time, I beheld the soft bright  
moon as it rose, casting its mellow light into my felons cell,  
dissipating the darkness and filling it with that soft pleasant  
light which causes such thrills of joy to all those in like  
circumstance with myself. This morning for the last time, I  
beheld the glorious sun of yesterday rising in the far-off East,  
away off in the country where our Lord Jesus Christ first  
proclaimed salvation to man, and now as he rises higher and his*



**RACE WAR,**

**NOT CIVIL WAR**

*bright light takes the place of the pale, soft moonlight, I will take my pen, for the last time, to write you who are bound to me by those strong ties (yea, the strongest that God ever instituted,) the ties of blood and relationship. I am well, both in body and in mind. And now, dear ones, if it were not that I know your hearts will be filled with sorrow at my fate, I could pass from this earth without a regret. Why should you sorrow? Why should your hearts be racked with grief? Have I not everything to gain and nothing to lose by the change? I fully believe that not only myself but also all three of my poor comrades who are to ascend the same scaffold- (a scaffold already made sacred to the cause of freedom, by the death of that great champion of human freedom, Capt. JOHN BROWN) are prepared to meet our God. I am only leaving a world filled with sorrow and woe to enter one in which there is but one lasting day of happiness and bliss. I feel that God in his mercy has spoken peace to my soul, and that all my numerous sins are now forgiven me. Dear parents, brothers and sisters, it is true that I am now in a few hours to start on a journey from which no traveler returns. Yes, long before this reaches you, I shall as I sincerely hope, have met our brother and sister who have for years been worshiping God around his throne - singing praises to him, and thanking him that he gave his Son to die that they might have eternal life. I pray daily and hourly that I may be fitted to have my home with them, and that you, one and all, may prepare your souls to meet your God, that so, in the end, though we meet no more on earth, we shall meet in Heaven, where we shall not be parted by the demands of the cruel and unjust monster Slavery. But think not that I am complaining, for I feel reconciled to meet my fate. I pray God that his will be done; not mine. Let me tell you that it is not the mere act of having to meet death, which I should regret, (if I should express regret I mean,) but that such an unjust institution should exist as the one which demands my life; and not my life only, but the lives of those to whom my life bears but the relative value of zero to the infinite. I beg of you one and all that you will not grieve about me, but that you will thank God that he spared me time to make my peace with Him. And now, dear ones, attach no blame to anyone for my coming here for not any person but myself is to blame. I have no antipathy against anyone, I have freed my mind of all hard feelings against every living being, and I ask all who have any thing against me to do the same. And now dear parents, Brothers and sisters, I must bid you to serve your God and meet me in heaven. I must with a few words, close my correspondence with those who are the most near and dear to me: but I hope, in the end, we may again commune, never to cease. Dear ones, he who writes this will, in a few hours, be in this world no longer. Yes, these fingers which hold the pen with which this is written will, before to-day's sun has reached his meridian have laid it aside forever, and this poor soul have taken its flight to meet its God. And now dear ones I must bid*



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

*you that last, long, sad farewell. Good-day, Father, Mother,  
Henry, William, and Freddy, Sarah and Mary, serve your God and  
meet me in heaven.  
Your Son and Brother to eternity,  
[John A. Copeland](#).*

**OBERLIN COLLEGE**

Is it that [Aaron D. Stevens](#), and 10 of Captain Brown's black supporters, having been duly found guilty of treason and murder by a jury of their white male peers, were [hanged](#) on this date?



Or is it that the other surrendered survivors of the raid on Harpers Ferry, [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#), [Shields Green](#), and [Aaron D. Stevens](#), having been duly found guilty of treason and murder by a jury of their white male peers, were [hanged](#) on this date?<sup>111</sup>

A monument would be erected by the citizens of [Oberlin, Ohio](#) in honor of their three free citizens of color who had died in the raid or been [hanged](#), [Shields Green](#), [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#), and [Lewis Sheridan Leary](#) (the 8-foot marble monument would be moved to Vine Street Park in 1971).

**WHAT I'M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND  
YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF**

December 17, Saturday: George C. Boniface portrayed [John Brown](#) at [New-York](#)'s Old Bowery Theater in "The Insurrection, or, Kansas and Harpers Ferry."



December 17: P. M.— To Walden.

The snow being some three or four inches deep, I see rising above it, generally, at my old bean-field, only my little white pines set last spring in the midst of an immense field of *Solidago nemoralis*, with a little sweet-fern (i. e. a large patch of it on the north side). What a change there will be in a few years, this little forest of

Not Civil War


"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

goldenrod giving place to a forest of pines!

By the side of the Pout's Nest, I see on the pure white snow what looks like dust for half a dozen inches under a twig. Looking closely, I find that the twig is hardhack and the dust its slender, light-brown, chaffy-looking seed, which falls still in copious showers, dusting the snow, when I jar it; and here are the tracks of a sparrow which has jarred the twig and picked the minute seeds a long time, making quite a hole in the snow. The seeds are so fine that it must have got more snow than seed at each peck. But they probably look large to its microscopic eyes. I see, when I jar it, that a meadow-sweet close by has quite similar, but larger, seeds. This the reason, then, that these plants rise so high above the snow and retain their seeds, dispersing it on the least jar over each successive layer of snow beneath them; or it is carried to a distance by the wind. What abundance and what variety in the diet of these small granivorous birds, while I find only a few nuts still! These stiff weeds which no snow can break down hold their provender. What the cereals are to men, these are to the sparrows. The only threshing they require is that the birds fly against their spikes or stalks. A little further I see the seed-box (?) (*Ludwigia*) full of still smaller, yellowish seeds. And on the ridge north is the track of a partridge [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] amid the shrubs. It has hopped up to the low clusters of smooth sumach berries, sprinkled the snow with them, and eaten all but a few. Also, here only, or where it has evidently jarred them down – whether intentionally or not, I am not sure – are the large oval seeds of the stiff-stalked lespezeza, which I suspect it ate, with the sumach berries. There is much solid food in them. When the snow is deep the birds could easily pick the latter out of the heads as they stand on the snow.



I observe, then, eaten by birds to-day, the seed of hardhack and meadow-sweet, sumach, and probably lespezeza, and even seed-box.

Under the hill, on the southeast side of R. W. E.'s lot, where the hemlock stands, I see many tracks of squirrels. The dark, thick green of the hemlock (amid the pines) seems to attract them as a covert. The snow under the hemlock is strewn with the scales of its cones, which they (and perhaps birds?) have stripped off, and some of its little winged seeds. It is pleasant to see the tracks of these squirrels (I am not sure whether they are red or

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111. In *THE CAPTURE AND EXECUTION OF JOHN BROWN: A TALE OF MARTYRDOM*, by ELIJAH AVEY, EYE WITNESS, WITH THIRTY ILLUSTRATIONS, dated 1906, we have on page 45 an assertion that the white men [John E. Cook](#) and [Edwin Coppoc](#), and then the black men [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#) and [Shields Green](#), were [hanged](#) on December 16th, 1859. The reference says that, the gallows being not large enough, the 2 black men Copeland and Green were forced to stand and watch the 2 white men Cook and Coppoc being hanged before themselves ascending the scaffold. But I have from another reference this assertion that it was one surrendered surviving white man, [Aaron D. Stevens](#), who was hanged on the 16th along with 10 black supporters of Captain [John Brown](#), and that Cook actually would be among the last hanged. Which account would be correct — and why is there such a glaring discrepancy between these various accounts?

The book *SECRET SIX* treats each retreating admission of each of the co-conspirators in treason as if it were holy writ. No attempt has been made to discern, behind this haze of post-facto explanations and justifications, what the brags of these participants might have been had their plot been successful in initiating the race war they contemplated and had this race war been completed, as it would certainly have been completed, by a historic genocide against black Americans. (Joel Silbey has contended, in “The Civil War Synthesis in American History,” that postbellum American historians have been misconstruing antebellum American politics by viewing them in conjunction with our knowledge of the bloodbath that followed. It is only after the fact that we can “know” that the US Civil War amounted to a sectional dispute, North versus South. We avoid learning that before the fact, it was undecided whether this conflict was going to shape up as a race conflict, a class conflict, or a sectional conflict. We avoid knowing that the raid on Harpers Ferry might have resulted in a race war, in which peoples of color would be exterminated in order to create an all-white America, or might have resulted in a class war, in which the laboring classes might have first destroyed the plantation owners’ equity by killing their slaves, and then gone on to purge the nation of the white plantation owners themselves, with their privileged-class endowments.) Also, according to the endmatter, the *SECRET SIX* study had obtained its material on [Frederick Douglass](#) basically from McFeely’s *FREDERICK DOUGLASS* of 1991, and its material on [Thoreau](#) from Sanborn’s *HENRY DAVID THOREAU* of 1917, neither of which were the last word on the subject when the book was prepared. In addition, this work provides no reference whatever for the Emerson life: evidently he was simply presumed not to be of even marginal pertinence. There is no consideration to be found anywhere in this volume of the comparison event: the other American struggle for freedom, the one which had taken place in [Haiti](#) under General [Toussaint Louverture](#).

For these reasons, the study is, fundamentally, incompetent. It is as if O.J. Simpson and his Dream Team had been allowed to control what would appear in our social history texts. Or, it is as if the White House staff had been allowed to define once and for all the extent of President [Richard Milhouse Nixon](#)’s involvement in the Watergate break-in, with, after their initial defensive testimony, after their establishment of the official consensus “truth,” all explanations accepted at their putative face value — with no further questioning tolerated.

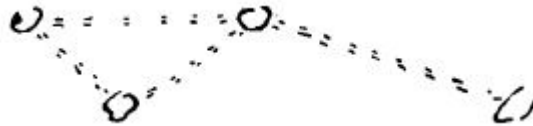
**SECRET “SIX”**



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

gray or both, for I see none) leading straight from the base of one tree to that of another, thus leaving untrodden triangles, squares, and polygons of every form, bounded by much trodden highways. One, two, three, and the track is lost on the upright bole of a pine, – as if they had played at base-running from goal to goal, while pine cones were thrown at them on the way. The tracks of two or three suggest a multitude. You come thus on the tracks of these frisky and volatile (semivolitant) creatures in the midst of perfect stillness and solitude, as you might stand in a hall half an hour after the dancers had departed.



I see no nests in the trees, but numerous holes through the snow into the earth, whence they have emerged. They have loitered but little on the snow, spending their time chiefly on the trees, their castles, when abroad. The snow is strewn not only with hemlock scales, but, under other trees, with the large white pine scales for rods together where there is no track, the wind having scattered them as they fell, and also the shells of hickory-nuts. It reminds me of the platform before a grocery where nuts are sold. You see many places where they have probed the snow for these white pine cones, evidently those which they cut off green and which accordingly have not opened so as to drop the seeds. This was perhaps the design in cutting them off so early, – thus to preserve them under the snow (not dispersed). Do they find them by the scent? At any rate they will dig down through the snow and come right upon a pine cone or a hickory-nut or an acorn, which you and I cannot do.

Two or three acres of Walden, off the bar, not yet frozen. Saw in [IT] a good-sized black duck, which did not dive while I looked. I suspect it must have been a *Fuligula*, though I saw no white.

December 22, Thursday: Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky was made junior assistant to the head of his administrative department in the Russian Ministry of Justice, St. Petersburg.

Murmures éoliens op46 for piano by Louis Moreau Gottschalk was performed for the initial time, in [Havana](#), by the composer.

A poem “[Brown of Ossawatomie](#)” by Friend [John Greenleaf Whittier](#) appeared in the New-York [Independent](#):

John Brown of Ossawatomie spake on his dying day:  
“I will not have to shrive my soul a priest in Slavery’s pay.  
But let some poor slave-mother whom I have striven to free,  
With her children, from the gallows-stair put up a prayer for me!”

John Brown of Ossawatomie, they led him out to die;  
And lo! a poor slave-mother with her little child pressed nigh.  
Then the bold, blue eye grew tender, and the old harsh face grew mild,  
As he stooped between the jeering ranks and kissed the negro’s child.

The shadows of his stormy life that moment fell apart;  
And they who blamed the bloody hand forgave the loving heart.  
That kiss from all its guilty means redeemed the good intent,  
And round the grisly fighter’s hair the martyr’s aureole bent!

Perish with him the folly that seeks through evil good  
Long live the generous purpose unstained with human blood!  
Not the raid of midnight terror, but the thought which underlies;  
Not the borderer’s pride of daring, but the Christian’s sacrifice.

Nevermore may yon Blue Ridges the Northern rifle hear,  
Nor see the light of blazing homes flash on the negro’s spear.  
But let the free-winged angel Truth their guarded passes scale,  
To teach that right is more than might, and justice more than mail!

So vainly shall Virginia set her battle in array;



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

In vain her trampling squadrons knead the winter snow with clay.  
She may strike the pouncing eagle, but she dares not harm the dove;  
And every gate she bars to Hate shall open wide to Love!

The Reverend [William Rounseville Alger](#) delivered an oration before the Reverend Theodore Parker's Fraternity in the Boston Music Hall, entitled "The historic purchase of freedom." (This would soon be published in Boston by the firm of Walker, Wise & Company as THE HISTORIC PURCHASE OF FREEDOM: AN ORATION DELIVERED BEFORE THE FRATERNITY, IN THE MUSIC HALL, BOSTON, DEC. 22, 1859, THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LANDING OF THE PILGRIMS AT PLYMOUTH.)

A country doctor and astronomy buff named Lescarbault of the village of Orgeres in France notified astronomical authorities that he had seen a round black spot, a planet, cross the upper one-fourth of the diameter of the face of the sun, on an upward-slanting path, for over an hour and a quarter. (The doctor would be awarded the French Legion of Honor and the new planet would be given the name Vulcan. There is not, however, such a planet.)

SKY EVENT



December 22: Another fine winter day.

P.M.—To Flint's Pond.

C. is inclined to walk in the road, it being better walking there, and says: "You don't wish to see anything but the sky to-day and breathe this air. You could walk in the city to-day, just as well as in the country. You only wish to be out." This was because I inclined to walk in the woods or by the river.

As we passed under the elm beyond George Heywood's, I looked up and saw a fiery hangbird's nest dangling over the road. What a reminiscence of summer, a fiery hangbird's nest dangling from an elm over the road when perhaps the thermometer is down to -20 (?), and the traveller goes beating his arms beneath it! It is hard to recall the strain of that bird then.

We pause and gaze into the Mill Brook on the Turnpike bridge. C. says that in Persia they call the ripple-marks on sandy bottoms "chains" or "chain-work." I see a good deal of cress there, on the bottom, for a rod or two, the only green thing to be seen. No more slimy than it usually is beneath the water in summer. Is not this the plant which most, or most conspicuously, preserves its greenness in the winter? Is it not now most completely in its summer state of any plant? So far as the water and the mud and the cress go, it is a summer scene. It is green as ever, and waving in the stream as in summer.

How nicely is Nature adjusted! The least disturbance of her equilibrium is betrayed and corrects itself. As I looked down on the surface of the brook, I was surprised to see a leaf floating, as I thought, up the stream, but I was mistaken. The motion of a particle of dust on the surface of any brook far inland shows which way the earth declines toward the sea, which way lies the constantly descending route, and the only one.

I see in the chestnut woods near Flint's Pond where squirrels have collected the small chestnut burs left on the trees and opened them, generally at the base of the trunks on the snow. These are, I think, all small and imperfect burs, which do not so much as open in the fall and are rejected then, but, hanging on the tree, they have this use at least, as the squirrels' winter food.

Three men are fishing on Flint's Pond, where the ice is seven or eight inches thick. I look back to the wharf rock shore and see that rush (cladium I have called it), the warmest object in the landscape, — a narrow line of warm yellow rushes — for they reflect the western light, — along the edge of the somewhat snowy pond and next the snow-clad and wooded shore. This rush, which is comparatively inconspicuous in the summer, becomes thus in the winter afternoons a conspicuous and interesting object, lit up by the westering sun.

The fisherman stands erect and still on the ice, awaiting our approach, as usual forward to say that he has had no luck. He has been here since early morning, and for some reason or other the fishes won't bite. You won't catch him here again in a hurry. They all tell the same story. The amount of it is he has had "fisherman's luck," and if you walk that way you may find him at his old post to-morrow. It is hard, to be sure, — four little fishes to be divided between three men, and two and a half miles to walk; and you have only got a more ravenous appetite for the supper which you have not earned. However, the pond floor is not a bad place to spend a winter day.

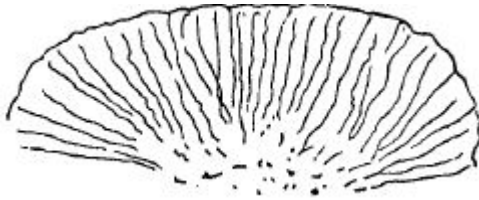


## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

On what I will call Sassafras Island, in this pond, I notice the largest and handsomest high blueberry bush that I ever saw, about ten feet high. It divides at the ground into four stems, all very large and the largest three inches in diameter (one way) at three feet high, and at the ground, where they *seem* to form one trunk (at least *grown* together), nine inches in diameter. These stems rise upward, spreading a little in their usual somewhat zigzag manner, and are very handsomely clothed with large gray and yellow lichens with intervals of the (*smoothish?* and) finely divided bark. The bark is quite reddish near the ground. The top, which is spreading and somewhat flattish or corymbose, consists of a great many fine twigs, which give it a thick and dark appearance against the sky compared with the more open portion beneath. It was perfectly sound and vigorous.

In a (apparently kingbird's?) nest on this island I saw three cherry-stones, as if it had carried home this fruit to its young. It was, outside, of gnaphalium and saddled on a low limb. Could it have been a cherry-bird? The cladium (?) retains its seeds over the ice, little conical, sharp-pointed, flat-based, dark-brown, shining seeds. I notice some seeds left on a large dock, but see none of parsnips or other umbelliferous plants. The furrows in the snow on the hillsides look somewhat like this:—



December 24, Saturday: Mütercim Mehmed Rüstü Pasha replaced Kibrisli Mehmed Pasha as Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire.

[Oberlin College](#) Professor James Monroe returned empty-handed that Christmas Eve to [Oberlin, Ohio](#), having failed to retrieve [John Anderson Copeland, Jr.](#)'s body from Virginia authorities.

The Reverend [Samuel Joseph May](#) had written to the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) — who had gone off to Rome in part for his health and in part because he knew what was going to happen at [Harpers Ferry](#) and very well understood that he would pay for his part in this were he captured by the federal government. Now a belligerent letter arrived from Parker in Italy characterizing [John Brown](#) as “an upright & a downright man, who took his life in his hand & said ‘Slavery **shall** go down.’”

[NOTE THAT FRIEND [JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER](#), WHEN OFFERED ONE OF THE PIKES WHICH HAD BEEN INTENDED FOR DISTRIBUTION TO REBELLING SLAVES FOR HIS INSPECTION, WOULD DECLINE WITH THE COMMENT “IT LOOKS TOO MUCH LIKE MURDER,” AND THAT THE REVEREND [ADIN BALLOU](#) HAD JUST INSISTED THAT TO CHARACTERIZE SUCH A MAN AS [JOHN BROWN](#), A MERE “MILITARY ADVENTURER,” AS A “SELF-SACRIFICING REDEEMER” ON THE MODEL OF JESUS WOULD BE “UNTRUTHFUL, UNJUST, AND UTTERLY ABSURD.”]



December 24: P.M.—To Flint's Pond.

A strong and very cold northwest wind. I think that the cold winds are oftenest not northwest, but northwest by west. There is, in all, an acre or two in Walden not yet frozen, though half of it has been frozen more than a week. I measure the blueberry bush on Flint's Pond Island. The five stems are united at the ground, so as to make one round and solid trunk thirty-one inches in circumference, but probably they have grown together there, for they become separate at about six inches above. They may have sprung from different seeds of one berry. At three feet from the ground they measure eleven inches, eleven, eleven and a half, eight, and six and a half, or, on an average, nine and a half. I climbed up and found a comfortable seat with my feet four feet above the ground, and there was room for three or four more there, but unfortunately this was not the season for berries.




## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

There were several other clumps of large ones there. One clump close by the former contained twenty-three stems within a diameter of three feet, and their average diameter at three feet from the ground was about two inches. These had not been cut, because they stood on this small island which has little wood beside, and therefore had grown the larger. The two prevailing lichens on them were *Parmelia caperata* and *saxatilis*, extending quite around their trunks; also a little of a *parmelia* more glaucous than the last one, and a little green usnea and a little ramalina. [*Vide* specimens in drawer.]

This island appears to be a mere stony ridge three or four feet high, with a very low wet shore on each side, even as if the water and ice had shoved it up, as at the other end of the pond.

I saw the tracks of a partridge [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] more than half an inch deep in the ice, extending from this island to the shore, she having walked there in the slush. They were quite perfect and reminded me of bird-tracks in stone. She may have gone there to bud on these blueberry trees. I saw where she spent the night at the bottom of that largest clump, in the snow.

Perhaps yet larger ones were seen here before we came to cut off the trees. Judging from those whose rings I have counted, the largest of those stems must be about sixty years old. The stems rise up in a winding and zigzag manner, one sometimes resting in the forks of its neighbor. There were many more clumps of large ones there.



December 31, Saturday: Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper commented that:

Ever since John Brown's mad attempt at Harper's Ferry, the Southern [white] people seem to have lost their common sense and chivalry.


Late in this year or early in the following one Phineas Taylor Barnum would obtain the services of the 19-year-old slightly retarded black microcephalic dwarf, at the going wage-labor rate of \$1.<sup>00</sup> per day, whom he would soon begin to bill as "Zip" (as in "Zip Coon"), the "What is It?", or the "Man-Monkey!" Barnum referred to his exhibit as "it" and threatened Johnson that he would dock his pay should he ever acknowledge, to the audiences at the American Museum, that his name was William Henry Johnson. Audiences would throw coins at him and refer to him as "a cross between a nigger and a baboon." Johnson would become one of Barnum's 3 all-time great human presentations, in a league with the midget-man "General Tom Thumb" and the nightingale-girl Jenny Lind.



December 31. Thermometer at 7.45 A.M., -1°, yet even more vapor is rising from the open water below my boat's place than on the 29th, when it was -15°. The wind is southwesterly, i.e. considerably south of west. This shows that fog over the water is a phenomenon of the morning chiefly, as well in winter as in summer. You will see a fog over the water in a winter morning, though the temperature may be considerably higher than at midday when no fog is seen.

There has evidently been a slight fog generally in the night, and the trees are white with it. The crystals are directed southwesterly, or toward the wind. I think that these crystals are particularly large and numerous, and the trees (willows) particularly white, next to the open water spaces, where the vapor even now is abundantly rising. Is this fog in the night occasioned by the cold earth condensing the moisture which a warmer wind has brought to us?

At 10 A.M., thermometer 18°. I see no vapor from the water.

Crows [American Crow  *Corvus brachyrhynchos*] yesterday flitted silently, if not ominously, over the street, just after the snow had fallen, as if men, being further within, were just as far off as usual. This is a phenomenon of both cold weather and snowy. You hear nothing; you merely see these black apparitions, though they come near enough to look down your chimney and scent the boiling pot, and pass between the house and the barn.

Just saw moved a white oak, Leighton's, some five inches in diameter, with a frozen mass of earth some five or five and a half feet in diameter and two plus thick. It was dug round before the frost,—a trench about a foot wide and filled with stalks, etc.—and now pried up with levers till on a level with the ground, then dragged off. It would not have cost half so much if a sloping path had been dug to it on one side so that the drag could have been placed under it in the hole and another dug at the hole it was removed to,—unless the last were planked over





## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

and it was dragged on to it.

They were teaming ice before sunrise (from Sam Barrett's Pond) on the morning of the 29th, when the thermometer was 16 or 20 degrees below. Cold work, you would say. Yet some say it is colder in thawing weather, if you have to touch the ice.

P.M.—To the sweet-gale meadow or swamp up Assabet.

I notice that one or more of the terminal leaflets remain on the branches of the flowering fern commonly.

See where probably a shrike (do I ever see a small hawk in winter?) has torn a small bird in pieces and its slate-colored down and its feathers have been blown far and wide over the snow.

There is a great deal of hemlock scales scattered over the recent snow (at the Hemlocks), evidently by birds on the trees, and the wind has blown them southeast,—scales, seeds, and cones,—and I see the tracks of small birds that have apparently picked the seeds from the snow also. It may have been done by goldfinches. I see a tree sparrow hopping close by, and perhaps they eat them on the snow. Some of the seeds have blown at least fifteen rods southeast. So the hemlock seed is important to some birds in the winter.

All the sound witch-hazel nuts that I examine are empty.

How vain to try to teach youth, or anybody, truths! They can only learn them after their own fashion, and when they get ready. I do not mean by this to condemn our system of education, but to show what it amounts to. A hundred boys at college are drilled in physics and metaphysics, languages, etc. There may be one or two in each hundred, prematurely old perchance, who approaches the subject from a similar point of view to his teachers, but as for the rest, and the most promising, it is like agricultural chemistry to so many Indians. They get a valuable drilling, it may be, but they do not learn what you profess to teach. They at most only learn where the arsenal is, in case they should ever want to use any of its weapons. The young men, being young, necessarily listen to the lecturer in history, just as they do to the singing of a bird. They expect to be affected by something he may say. It is a kind of poetic pabulum and imagery that they get. Nothing comes quite amiss to their mill.

I think it will be found that he who speaks with most authority on a given subject is not ignorant of what has been said by his predecessors. He will take his place in a regular order, and substantially add his own knowledge to the knowledge of previous generations.

The oblong-conical sterile flower-buds or catkins of the sweet-gale, half a dozen at the end of each black twig, dark-red, oblong-conical, spotted with black, and about half an inch long, are among the most interesting buds of the winter. The leaf-buds are comparatively minute. The white edges of their scales and their regular red and black colors make the imbrication of the bud very distinct. The sterile and fertile flowers are not only on distinct plants, but they commonly grow in distinct patches. Sometimes I detect the one only for a quarter of a mile, and then the other begins to prevail, or both may be found together. It grows along the wet edge of banks and the river and in open swamps.

The mulleins are full of minute brown seeds, which a jar sprinkles over the snow, and [THEY] look black there; also the primrose, of larger brown seeds, which rattle out in the same manner.

One of the two large docks, perhaps obtusifolius, commonly holds its seeds now, but they are very ready to fall. (Mainly one-seeded; vide three-ribbed goldenrod meadow.)

There appears to be not much (compared with the fall) seed left on the common or gray goldenrod, its down being mostly gone, and the seed is attached to that.

Potentilla Norvegica appears to have some sound seed in its closed heads.

The very gray flattish heads of the calamint are quite full of minute dark-brown seed.

The conical heads of the cone-flower also are full of long blackish seeds. Both the last drop their seeds on being inverted and shaken.

I see also the yellow lily (*L. Canadense*) pods with its three now gray divisions spreading open like the petals of a flower, and more than half the great red flattish triangularish or semicircularish seeds gone. The pod boys throw with a humming sound.

Even the sidesaddle-flower, where it shows its head above the snow, now gray and leathery, dry, is covered beneath its cap with pretty large close-set light-brown seeds.

I see one or more sedges with seeds yet, one apparently the *Carex debilis*, if it is not *flava*?

A man may be old and infirm. What, then, are the thoughts he thinks? what the life he lives? They and it are, like himself, infirm. But a man may be young, athletic, active, beautiful. Then, too, his thoughts will be like his person. They will wander in a living and beautiful world. If you are well, then how brave you are! How you hope! You are conversant with joy! A man thinks as well through his legs and arms as his brain. We exaggerate the importance and exclusiveness of the headquarters. Do you suppose they were a race of consumptives and dyspeptics who invented Grecian mythology and poetry? The poet's words are, "You would almost say the body

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thought!" I quite say it. I trust we have a good body then.





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1860

When the first version of Victor Hugo's drawing of [John Brown](#) on the gallows appeared in Paris, it bore the date "December 2." The printed copies of this drawing were immediately seized by the police because December 2d happened to be the anniversary of Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état* against the 2d French Republic. —Removal of the date from the caption of the drawing, however, would clear up this local political issue with the French police. It was thus that the picture [SEE THE FOLLOWING FRAME] would bear simply the caption:

*Pro Christo—Sicut Christus, John Brown, — Charleston.  
Designed by Victor Hugo.*

HDT

WHAT?

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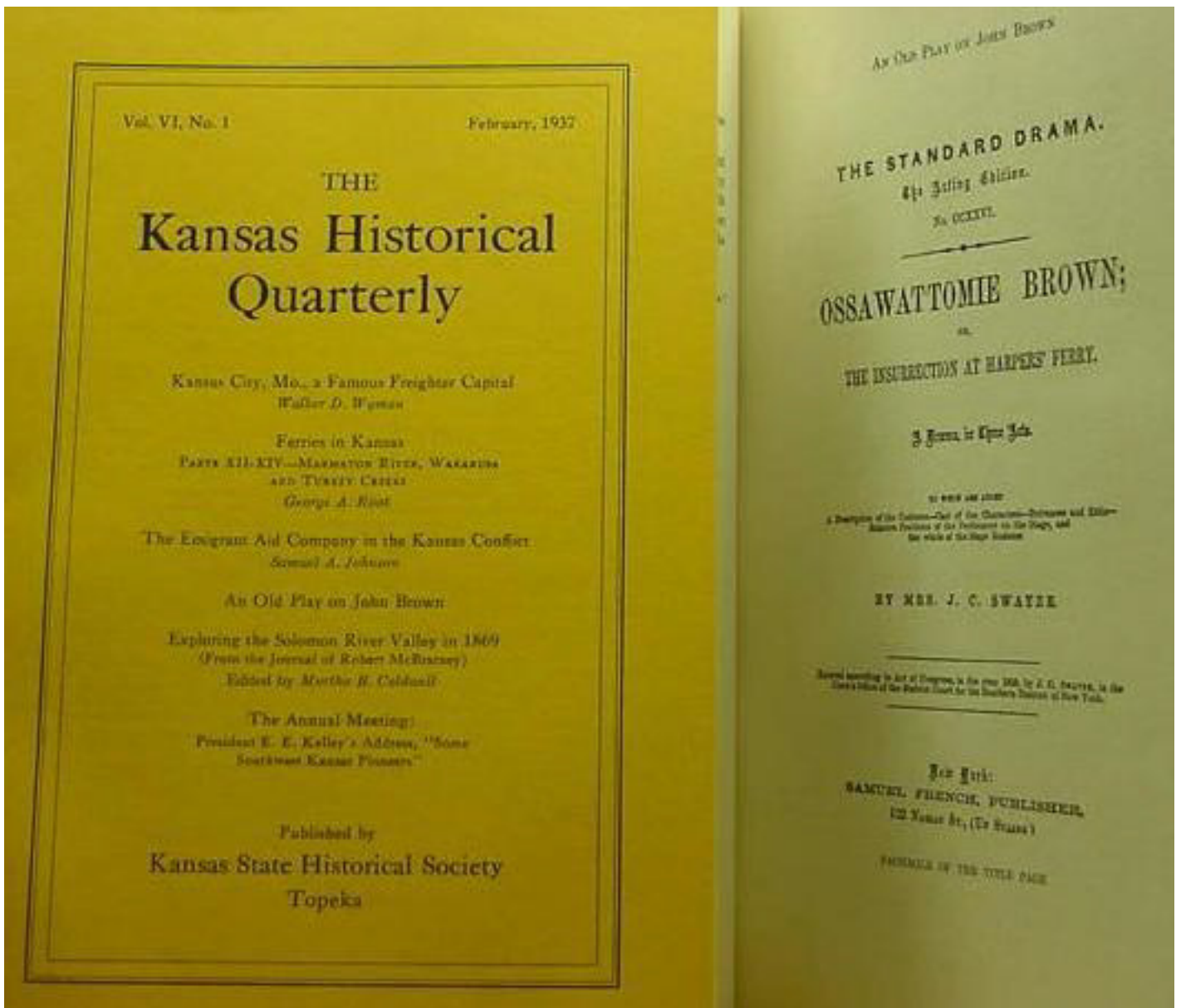


# RACE WAR,

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During this year the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) would be creating the essays “Visit to John Brown’s Household,” “The Maroons of Jamaica,” and “The Maroons of Surinam,” the last two essays being illustrations of the practicality of [Captain John Brown](#)’s aim to enable slaves to arm themselves and form autonomous communities in the mountains.

The story of [Captain Brown](#) had so seized the attention of the nation, that it had become subject matter for a play, “[Ossawatimie Brown](#), or, The Insurrection at Harpers’ Ferry”:





THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION



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January 6, Friday: [John Brown](#) had written a long autobiographical letter to [George Luther Stearns](#) on July 15, 1857  and at some point in December 1859  a copy of this had been passed along to [Waldo Emerson](#). Much of the materials in this letter surfaced at this point, not only in facts but also in phrasing, in a presentation Emerson was delivering in Salem.



AUTOBIOGRAPHY



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JANUARY 6th]

February: In a course of lectures on the “Social Destiny of Man” delivered at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC, Dr. Albert T. Bledsoe, professor of mathematics at the University of Virginia and a published proslavery ideologue, critiqued the excessive individualism of abolitionists as constituting a threat to the Union and projected that [secession](#) might be expected as the result of their efforts.

Iowa Representative Samuel Curtis introduced a bill that would pass the House of Representatives, to fund a Transcontinental Railway, but which could not be reconciled with its Senate version due to opposition from the southern states, such as by Senator [James Murray Mason](#), that would insist on a more southerly route, one closer to the 42d parallel. (The Iowa representative would try again in 1861, and again fail due to Southern intransigence; however, once the southern politicians had abandoned their seats in the federal government, the House of Representatives would approve the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 on May 6th, 1862, the federal Senate would approve it on June 20th, 1862, and President Abraham Lincoln would sign it into law on July 1st, 1862.)

At about this time [John Brown, Jr.](#), [James Redpath](#), [Thaddeus Hyatt](#), and [Lewis Hayden](#) were being summoned before Senator [James Murray Mason](#)'s special investigatory committee of the US Senate to be interrogated about the details of the [Harpers Ferry](#) conspiracy, and Brown, Jr., in hiding in Ohio, was refusing to respond. When the committee was made aware that they had summoned a person of color to incriminate himself before them, they backtracked and rescinded their warrant on Hayden,<sup>112</sup> and warrants were made out only in the names of Brown, Jr., Redpath, and Hyatt. Of these, only Hyatt would actually come before the committee in chains, and he, upon refusing to testify, would be remanded to the District of Columbia's prison.



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John C. Rutherford, a legislator from Virginia, ventured to mention the explicit linkage which was being made between the [Secret "Six"](#) supporters of Northern white abolitionists such as [John Brown](#) and the supporters of Southern white abolitionist racists such as [Hinton Rowan Helper](#), by referring to them in a pot category "admirers of Brown and endorsers of Helper." The author of the incendiary *THE IMPENDING CRISIS OF THE SOUTH: HOW TO MEET IT*, which offered a commonality of interest between the poor white man of the North and the poor white man of the South against the interests of the rich white man of the South with his substantial investment in his African chattels, was perhaps the most dangerous man, from their point of view, in our nation — more dangerous by far than any mere deluded idealist such as Brown could ever hope to become.

Helper had, of course, fled his native South to avoid assassination by indignant rich white men, seeking the shelter afforded by New-York.

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112. This would count as another of the many evidences that the business of the committee was the suppression of information as to the nature of the conspiracy, rather than any public disclosure of its real extent or purpose. Had they been intent on finding out anything, when they discovered that [Hayden](#) was a black man they would have had him tortured to death!

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[Henry Thoreau](#)'s "A Plea for Captain John Brown" and "The Martyrdom of John Brown" were published in [James Redpath](#), ed., ECHOES OF HARPER'S FERRY. Clearly, Henry was attempting to find some way to spin the treason situation by reconstructing Captain Brown as a sort of hero of [civil disobedience](#) along the lines of Sir [Thomas More](#) or [Friend Mary Dyer](#):



## I.

## LECTURE BY HENRY D. THOREAU.\*

I TRUST that you will pardon me for being here. I do not wish to force my thoughts upon you, but I feel forced myself. Little as I know of Captain Brown, I would fain do my part to correct the tone and the statements of the newspapers, and of my countrymen generally, respecting his character and actions. It costs us nothing to be just. We can at least express our sympathy with, and admiration of, him and his companions, and that is what I now propose to do.

First, as to his history. I will endeavor to omit, as much as possible, what you have already read. I need not describe his person to you, for probably most of you have seen and will not soon forget him. I am told that his grandfather, John Brown, was an officer in the Revolution; that he himself was born in Connecticut about the beginning of this century, but early went with his father to Ohio. I heard him say that his father was a contractor who furnished beef to the army there, in the war of 1812; that he accompanied him to the camp, and assisted him in that employment, seeing a good deal of military life, more, perhaps, than if he had been a soldier, for he was often present at the councils of the officers. Especially, he learned by experience how armies are supplied and maintained in the field — a work which, he observed, re-

\* A Plea for Captain John Brown; read to the citizens of Concord, Mass., Sunday evening, October 30, 1859; also as the Fifth Lecture of the Fraternity Course, in Boston, November 1.





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As a person who reprocesses Thoreau materials, and as a Quaker adherent of the Peace Testimony, I am frequently asked how it is that I am able to pardon Henry for his defense of Brown. I've needed to give that issue long and hard thought, because I really do think of people such as Captain Brown, and Lord Protector Cromwell, as having been Al-Queda types, which is to say, pure and simple, that they had been terrorists. And nevertheless I really do look up to Henry David Thoreau, and admire his attitudes as well as his work product.

The answer I have found that satisfies me, lies in a careful consideration of the situation in which the white abolitionists found themselves after the raid on the federal arsenal. Proslavery Americans were of course in a fury, and were in the process of taking their vengeance upon the survivors of the action. It was a moment in which the entire American antislavery movement was at risk of being generally considered to be in disgrace – is this, **this**, what “being antislavery” amounts to? –Are these people willing to risk servile insurrection, and butchery? –Is an abolitionist the same as a fool? –Is an abolitionist the same as a terrorist? That 1859 situation cried out for spin control, which was, I suggest, what Thoreau, in his “A Plea for Captain Brown,” attempted to provide. His was a salvage operation, but it was not an attempt to salvage terrorism but an attempt to salvage an upright cause: it was a continuation of the righteous attempt to bring the peculiar institution of race slavery in the United States of America to its quietus.

After Captain John Brown had gone off on this raid of his, it hadn't been a perfect situation — and, in an imperfect situation, none of the alternative attitudes which a concerned individual can embrace are going to be perfect ones. However, the most imperfect attitude of all would have been an attitude of surrender to the righteousness of proslavery — surrender to the righteousness of proslavery was the one thing that the abolitionists simply could not and would not and should not commit — and that was the condition under which our Henry stepped to the fore.

**ONE COULD BE ELSEWHERE, AS ELSEWHERE DOES EXIST.  
ONE CANNOT BE ELSEWHEN SINCE ELSEWHEN DOES NOT.  
(TO THE WILLING MANY THINGS CAN BE EXPLAINED,  
THAT FOR THE UNWILLING WILL REMAIN FOREVER MYSTERIOUS.)**



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February 7, Tuesday: [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy arrived back in Concord, Massachusetts after his trip to visit the family of [John Brown](#) in North Elba, New York. Anne Brown and Sarah Brown would soon arrive to enroll as students in his school, with their tuition being funded by a general subscription of which the largest contributor was Mrs. [Rebecca B. Spring](#) of the failed [Eagleswood](#) social experiment near Perth Amboy, New Jersey. After spending a night with the Emerson family, these two daughters of Captain Brown would have their residence expenses paid, at a local boardinghouse (What were the Concord boardinghouses, anyway, besides that run by the Thoreau family's women? —Does anybody now know?), by the [Secret "Six"](#) conspirator [George Luther Stearns](#).



[Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to on business by Welch, Bigelow, & Co in Cambridge.

*Cambridge Feb 7. 60*  
*Mr Thoreau*  
*Dear Sir*  
*Enclosed*  
*please find draft on Boston for thirty Seven 50/100 Dollars*  
*the amt of your bill due*  
*By receipting the same*  
*and returning it you*  
*will oblige*  
*Yours truly*  
*Welch. Bigelow. & Co.*

In the afternoon [Thoreau](#) went to Walden Pond and Flint's Pond.



Feb. 7. 2 P.M.—To Walden and Flint's.  
Thermometer 43°. Fair, with many clouds, mostly obscuring the sun. Wind northwest, growing cooler. The sand has begun to flow on the west side of the cut, the east being bare. Nature has some bowels at last. I notice over the ditch near the Turnpike bridge, where water stands an inch or two deep over the ice, that the dust which had blown on to the ice from the road is now very regularly and handsomely distributed over the ice by the water, i.e., is broken into prettily shaped small black figures equally distant from one another, — so that what was a deformity is now a beauty.



Some kinds of worms or caterpillars have apparently crawled over it and left their trails on it, white or clear trails.



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February 21, Tuesday: The New York Evening Post carried, on page 4 under “New Publications,” a review of THE PUBLIC LIFE OF CAPT. [JOHN BROWN](#), BY [JAMES REDPATH](#), WITH AN AUTO-BIOGRAPHY OF HIS CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH (Boston: Thayer & Eldridge) that noted that the book was dedicated “to [Wendell Phillips](#), [Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) and [Henry D. Thoreau](#), defenders of the faithful, who, when the mob shouted ‘Madman!’ said ‘Saint!’”

## DEDICATION.

TO

WENDELL PHILLIPS, RALPH WALDO EMERSON,  
AND HENRY D. THOREAU,

DEFENDERS OF THE FAITHFUL,

WHO, WHEN THE MOB SHOUTED, “MADMAN!” SAID, “SAINT!”

I HUMBLY AND GRATEFULLY

*Dedicate this Work.*

JAMES REDPATH.

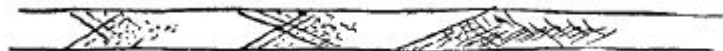
## THE PUBLIC LIFE OF BROWN

The author expressed gratitude for the help of Dr. Thomas H. Webb of Boston and [Richard J. Hinton](#) of Kansas in the preparation of this book.



Feb. 21. 2 P.M. — Thermometer forty-six and snow rapidly melting. It melts first and fastest where the snow is so thin that it feels the heat reflected from the ground beneath.

I see now, in the ruts in sand on hills in the road, those interesting ripples which I only notice to advantage in very shallow running water, a phenomenon almost, as it were, confined to melted snow running in ruts in the road in a thaw, especially in the spring. It is a spring phenomenon. The water, meeting with some slight obstacle, ever and anon appears to shoot across diagonally to the opposite side, while ripples from the opposite side intersect the former, producing countless regular and sparkling diamond-shaped ripples.



If you hold your head low and look along up such a stream in a right light, it is seen to have a regularly braided surface, tress-like, preserving its figures as if it were solid, though the stream is seen pulsing high through the



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middle ripples in the thread of the stream. The ripples are as rectilinear as ice-crystals. When you see the sparkling stream from melting snow in the ruts, know that then is to be seen this braid of the spring.

It was their very admiration of nature that made the ancients attribute those magnanimous qualities which are rarely to be found in man to the lion as her masterpiece, and it is only by a readiness, or rather preparedness, to see more than appears in a creature that one can appreciate what is manifest.

It is remarkable how many berries are the food of birds, mice, etc. Perhaps I may say that all are, however hard or bitter. This I am inclined to say, judging of what I do not know from what I do. For example, mountain-ash, prinus, skunk-cabbage, sumach, chokecherry, cornels probably, elder-berry, viburnums, rose hips, arum, poke, thorn, barberry, grapes, tupelo, amphicarpaea, thistle-down, bayberry (?), *Cornus florida*, checkerberry, hemlock, larch, pines, etc., birch, alder, juniper. The berries and seeds of wild plants generally, however little it is suspected by us, are the food of birds, squirrels, or mice.

BARBERRY

March: US Army headquarters in New-York City ordered 3 columns to operate independently in the Kiowa-Comanche country during the summer: one out of Fort Riley in [Kansas](#), one out of Fort Kearny, Nebraska, and one out of New Mexico.

A review of [James Redpath](#)'s THE PUBLIC LIFE OF [CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN](#). WITH AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF HIS CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH (Thayer and Eldridge, Boston, price \$1.00) appeared in this month's [Atlantic Monthly](#) magazine.



This book generalized, on its page 229, a truly preposterous allegation, that: "In the Canadian Provinces there are thousands of fugitive slaves. They are the picked men of the Southern States. Many of them are intelligent and rich; and all of them are deadly enemies of the South. Five hundred of them, at least, annually visit the Slave States, passing from Florida to Harpers Ferry, on heroic errands of mercy and deliverance. They have carried the Underground Railroad and the Underground Telegraph into nearly every Southern State." One way to distance oneself from such glorious generalizations by this Redpath person would be to pay attention to William Lloyd Still's detailed records as to the locales from which slaves were able to escape. Of some 800 cases recorded by Still, nearly all were from Maryland, Delaware, or Virginia (although there were a few North Carolinians who had been able to make their way to Norfolk and board a coastal vessel). Anyway, here is the review that was published in the [Atlantic Monthly](#):

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

It would have been well, had this book never been written. Mr. Redpath has understood neither the opportunities opened to him, nor the responsibilities laid upon him, in being permitted to write the "authorized" life of John Brown. His book, in whatever light it is viewed, -whether as the biography of a remarkable man, as an historic narrative of a series of extraordinary and important events, or simply as a mere piece of literary jobwork,- is equally unsatisfactory. He has shown himself incompetent to appreciate the character of the man whom he admires, and he has, consequently, done great wrong to his memory.



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There never was more need for a good life of any man than there was for one of John Brown. The whole country was curious to learn about him, and to be told his story. Those who thought the best of him, and those who thought the worst, were alike desirous to know more of him than the newspapers had furnished, and to become acquainted with the course of his life, and the training which had prepared him for Kansas and brought him to Harper's Ferry. Whatever view be taken of his character, he was a man so remarkable as to be well worthy of study. In the bitter and excited state of public feeling in regard to him, there was but one way in which his life could be properly told, - and that way was, to allow him, as far as possible, to tell it in his own words. For that part of his life which there were no letters of his to illustrate, his biographer should have been content to state facts in the simplest and most careful manner, entering into no controversy, and keeping himself entirely out of sight. Thus only could John Brown's character produce its due effect. His letters from prison had shown that he was a master of the homeliest and strongest English. His words said what they meant, and they were understood by everybody; he had found them in the Bible, and had been familiar with them all his life. Whatever he was, he could have told us better than any other man; and he was the only man who would have been listened to with much confidence concerning himself. Mr. Redpath has, very unfortunately, thought differently. He has not taken pains to collect even all the letters of John Brown which had been previously published; he has written in the worst temper and spirit of partisanship, so that with every cautious reader doubts attend many statements which rest only on his authority; he has thrust himself continually forward; and he has exercised no proper care in arranging his materials.

The truth is, that a life of Brown was not now needed for those who already admired the stalwart nature of the man, even though they might deplore his course, -for those who had had their hearts touched and stirred by his manliness, his truth, his courage, and his unwavering fidelity to conscience and faith in God; but it was greatly needed for that much larger class, -the mass of the Northern community, -whose timidity had been startled at his rash attempt, whose sympathy had been more or less awakened by his bearing and his death, but who were and are in a painful state of perplexity, in the endeavor to reconcile their abhorrence, or at least their disapproval, of his attack on Virginia, with their sense of the admirable nature of the qualities he displayed. It was needed also for the very large class who received from the newspapers but a confused and imperfect account of the events which took place in Virginia from October to December, and who, according to their political predilections, condemn or applaud the course of Captain Brown. And, above all, it was needed for the men who have disgraced themselves by denying to Brown the possession of any virtues, and who have outstripped his Southern enemies in applying to him



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the most opprobrious and the falsest epithets. Now, none of these classes will Mr. Redpath's book reach with effect. Its tone is such, it is so violent, so extravagant, that it will offend all right-thinking men. Even those who have known how to hold a steady and clear opinion, in the midst of the confusion of the popular mind, -who have not applauded Brown's acts of violence, and have condemned his judgment, but who have, nevertheless, honored what was noble in him, and sympathized with him in his strong love of liberty, -who, while acknowledging him guilty under the law, mourned that the law should not be tempered with mercy, -and who have recognized in him at once the excellences and the errors of an enthusiast, -those who have most faithfully endeavored to find the truth concerning him, though they will obtain some interesting information from Mr. Redpath's book, will be the most dissatisfied with it.

It has always been among the offences of the out-and-out Abolitionists, to abuse the force of words, and to make exclusive pretensions to virtue and the love of liberty. This book is written in the spirit and style of an Abolition tract. In representing John Brown as little more than a mere hero of the Abolitionists, the author has done essential disservice to the cause of freedom, and to the memory of a man who was as free from party-ties as he was from personal ambitions.

Although John Brown's character was a simple one, a long time must pass before it will be generally understood, and justice be done to it. The passion and the prejudice which the later acts of his life have excited cannot die away for years. Mr. Redpath has done his best to perpetuate them. In seasons of excitement, and amid the struggles of political contention, the men who use the most extravagant and the most violent words have, for a time, the advantage; but, in the long run, they damage whatever cause they may adopt; and the truth, which their declamations have obscured or their falsehoods have violated, finally asserts itself. In our country, the worth and the strength of temperance and moderation of speech seem to be peculiarly forgotten. Words, which should stand for things, are too commonly used with no respect to their essential meaning. Political debates are embittered, personal feeling wounded, the tone of manners lowered, and national character degraded, by this disregard of words as the symbol and expression of truth. Moderation is brought into disrepute, and justice, fairness, and honesty of opinion tendered as rare as they are difficult of attainment. The manner in which John Brown has been spoken of affords the plainest illustration of these facts. Extravagance in condemnation has been answered by extravagance in praise of his life and deeds.

The most interesting and the most novel part of Mr. Redpath's book is the letter written by John Brown in 1857, giving some account of his early life. It is, in all respects, a remarkable composition. It exhibits the main influences by which his character was formed; it affords a key to the history of his life; it illustrates the nature of the social institutions under which such a man could grow up; and it shows his natural traits, before they had become hardened and trained under the discipline



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of later experience and circumstance. Nothing has been more marked in the various exhibitions of his character, as they have come successively to view, than their complete consistency. This letter, this account of his youth, squares perfectly with what we know of his manhood. The whole of it should be read by all who would understand the man, with his native faculty of command, with his mingled sternness and tenderness, with his large heart, his steadfast will. The base of his soul was truth; and the motive power of his life, faith in the justice of God. He was a man of a rare type, - so rare in our times as to seem like a man of another age. He belonged to the same class with the Scottish Covenanters and the English Regicides. He belonged to the great company of those who have followed the footsteps of Gideon, and forgot that the armory of the Lord contained other weapons than the sword. He belonged to those who from time to time have adopted some cause, -the good old cause,- and have shrunk from no sacrifice which it required at their hands. "I have now been confined over a month," wrote John Brown to his children, in one of that most affecting series of letters from his prison, "with a good opportunity to look the whole thing as fair in the face as I am capable of doing, and I now feel most grateful that I am counted in the least possible degree worthy to suffer for the truth." "Suffering is a gift not given to every one," wrote one of the Covenanters, who was hanged in the Grassmarket in Edinburgh, in 1684, - "and I desire to bless God's name with my whole heart and soul, that He has counted such a poor thing as I am worthy of the gift of suffering."

That John Brown was wrong in his attempt to break up slavery by violence, few will deny. But it was a wrong committed by a good man, - by one who dreaded the vengeance of the Almighty and forgot His long-suffering. His errors were the result of want of patience and want of imagination, and he paid the penalty for them. He had faith in the Divine ordering of the affairs of this world; but he forgot that the processes by which evils like that of slavery are done away are thousand-year-long, -that, to be effectual, they must be slow,- that wrong is no remedy for wrong. He was an anachronism, and met the fate of all anachronisms that strive to stem and divert the present current by modes which the world has outgrown. But now that he and those dearest to him have so bitterly expiated his faults, both charity and justice demand that his virtues should be honored, and he himself mourned. It will be a gloomy indication of the poor, low spirit of our days, if fear and falsehood, if passion or indifference, should cause the lesson of John Brown's life to be neglected, or should check a natural sympathy with the noble heart of the old man. That lesson is not for any one part of the country more than another; that sympathy may be given by the South as well as by the North. It is not sympathy for his acts, but for the spirit of his life and the heroism of his death. The lesson of manliness, uprightness, and courage, which his life teaches, is to be learned by us, not merely as lovers of liberty, not as




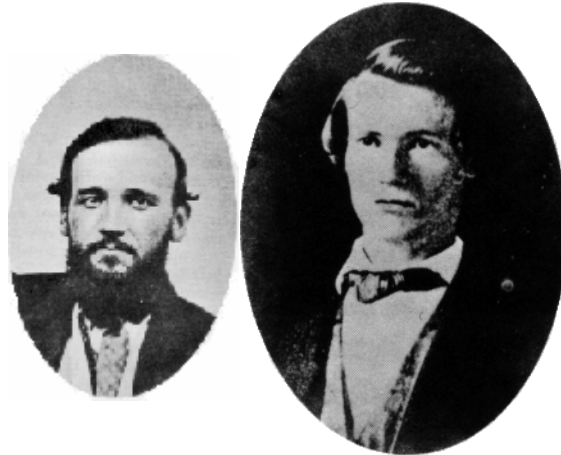
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opponents of slavery, but as men who need more manliness, more uprightness, more courage and simplicity in our common lives. All that is possible of apology for John Brown is to be found in his letters and in his speech to the court before his sentence. It is, perhaps, too soon to hope that these letters and this speech will be read with candor and a feeling of human brotherhood by those who now look with abhorrence or with indifference on his memory. But the time will come when they will be held at their true worth by all, as the expressions of a large, tender soul, — when they will be read with sympathetic pity, even by those who still find it difficult to forgive their author for his offence against society. These letters appeal to the better nature of every man and woman in America; and it will be a sad thing, if their appeal be disregarded. We trust, that, before long, a fairer and fuller biography than that by Mr. Redpath will remove the obstacle which this book now presents to the general appreciation of the character and life of John Brown.

### THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

 March 16, Friday: [Aaron Dwight Stevens](#) and [Albert Hazlett](#) (who had not taken part in the [Harpers Ferry](#) fighting but had been captured in Pennsylvania in the company of [John E. Cook](#)) were hanged, Stevens at the age of 29 and Hazlett at the age of 22.



The gallows that had turned off [John Brown](#) would be made into a portico in front of a private residence in Charlestown, Virginia. Pieces of the leftover timber, after this conversion, would be handed around as mementos as if they were pieces off the True Cross. Because of a relationship Stevens had with [Rebecca B. Spring](#), the bodies of Stevens and Hazlett would be interred on the grounds of the former [Eagleswood](#) social experiment on Raritan Bay near Perth Amboy, [New Jersey](#).<sup>113</sup>




March 16. 2 P. M.—Thermometer 55; wind slight, west by south. To Abner Buttrick's Hill. The buttercup radical leaves are many of them now a healthy dark green, as if they had acquired new life. I notice that such are particularly downy, and probably that enables them to endure the cold so well, like mulleins. Those and thistles and shepherd's-purse, etc., have the form of rosettes on the brown ground.






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Here is a flock of red-wings. [**Red-winged Blackbird**  *Agelaius phoeniceus*] I heard one yesterday, and I see a female among these. These are easily distinguished from grackles by the richness and clarity of their notes, as if they were a more developed bird. How handsome as they go by in a checker, each with a bright-scarlet shoulder! They are not so very shy, but mute when we come near. I think here are four or five grackles with them, which remain when the rest fly. They cover the apple trees like a black fruit. The air is full of song sparrows and bluebirds to-day.

The minister asked me yesterday: "What birds are they that make these little tinkling sounds? I haven't seen one." Song sparrows.

C. saw a green fly yesterday.

Saw a flock of sheldrakes [**Common Merganser**  *Mergus merganser*] a hundred rods off, on the Great Meadows, mostly males with a few females, all intent on fishing. They were coasting along a spit of bare ground that showed itself in the middle of the meadow, sometimes the whole twelve apparently in a straight line at nearly equal distances apart, with each its head under water, rapidly coasting along back and forth, and ever and anon one, having caught something, would be pursued by the others. It is remarkable that they find their finny prey on the middle of the meadow now, and even on the very inmost side, as I afterward saw, though the water is quite low. Of course, as soon as they are seen on the meadows there are fishes there to be caught. I never see them fish thus in the channel. Perhaps the fishes lie up there for warmth already.

I also see two gulls nearly a mile off. One stands still and erect for three quarters of an hour, or till disturbed, on a little bit of floated meadow-crust which rises above the water,—just room for it to stand on,—with its great white breast toward the wind. Then another comes flying past it, and alights on a similar perch, but which does not rise quite to the surface, so that it stands in the water. Thus they will stand for an hour, at least. They are not of handsome form, but look like great wooden images of birds, bluish-slate and white. But when they fly they are quite another creature.

The grass is covered with gossamer to-day, though I notice no floating flocks. This, then, is a phenomenon of the first warm and calm day after the ground is bare.

See larks about, though I have heard of them in the winter.



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113. The graves would at least initially be guarded out of a fear either real or imaginary that they would otherwise be desecrated by local people. The caskets would be taken from the neglected area at about the turn of the century, and moved to graves in the vicinity of the [John Brown](#) grave, under its boulder in the Adirondacks. When the [Eagleswood](#) social experiment started by [Marcus Spring](#) and [Rebecca B. Spring](#) on Raritan Bay had failed, it had been surveyed by [Henry Thoreau](#) as part of breaking the properties apart, and then the funds obtained were used by Marcus to reorganize the venture as a school to be operated by [Theodore Dwight Weld](#) and his wife [Angelina Emily Grimké Weld](#) and her sister [Sarah Moore Grimké](#). The Springs would move on, to California, the school would close, and the Eagleswood properties would transform into an industrial area.



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April 3, Tuesday: Frederik van Eeden was born in Haarlem in the Netherlands.

Pony Express service began, crossing northeastern [Kansas](#). Giddyup!

Representative [Eli Thayer](#) of Massachusetts delivered an address, "The polygamy question," in the US House of Representatives, in regard to polygamy as practiced by Mormon immigrants in the Utah territory.

Said Mr. THAYER. — Mr. Speaker, it has become apparent, in the progress of this debate, that there is at least one question on which the representatives of all portions of the country may agree. Every member from every section of the Union is ready to assert the odious criminality of polygamy. It is encouraging, it is refreshing, to know that there is at least one subject on which there is no sectionalism, in relation to which we have not heard the Representatives of North Carolina boasting that their people are much better than those of Massachusetts, nor the Representatives of the State of New York boasting that their people are better than those of Mississippi.

There is really, now, one practical question before us for our decision; and, sir, in my remarks upon it, I shall not treat it as an abstraction. I shall not treat it as a figure of speech, nor as a legal technicality. Polygamy is an existing fact; and as an existing fact, while I agree with members from every part of the country in denouncing it, I will so act as to insure its most speedy extermination. Is this a fact, sir, which began today, or yesterday, or last week? I should suppose, from the zeal which is manifested here, that it never was heard of till the beginning of this session of Congress.

But, sir, some thirteen years ago, one Brigham Young, a shrewd and selfish and unscrupulous adventurer, led certain Mormons from Illinois, or from Missouri, across what was then called the great American desert, by a long and wearisome journey, to the basin of the Great Salt Lake. Poor, deluded, ignorant fanatics were his followers, who, from having no religion at all, had been captivated by the theories of Joe Smith, and had joined the ranks of the Latter Day Saints. From time to time, there have been accessions to their number. Year after year, they have come from Wales and Scotland, from England and Germany, and from the States of this Confederacy. About two years ago, they attained their highest power. They are now declining in strength, harmony, and consolidation, and are diminishing in numbers. As a separate and peculiar community, they are doomed to speedy extinction. Congress has endured their increasing strength, and the insolence of their highest power, without action. Can we not possibly endure their decline and extermination, without this exhibition of paper authority and of spasmodic morality?

In the course of these thirteen years of Mormon history, we have had a Whig Administration, we have had two Democratic Administrations, and at one time, for one Congress, the Republicans had the organization of this House; and, sir, there never has been an act passed against this crime, to make it &



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penal offence. There it was, before the eyes of the country, before the world, and before Congress; but still no party, until this day, has taken the responsibility of proposing that it should be abolished by penal statute and by force of arms. Now there seems, as I said before, to be a feeling in this House, not known in the community at all, which could be accounted for only on the supposition that polygamy never was heard of till to-day. There is a spasm, sir, of morality, or a paroxysm, or a panic, or something that seems to impel certain men to feel the necessity of voting, and of voting **now**, against polygamy, at all hazards.

Mr. REAGAN. I desire to correct the gentleman on a point of fact. He is mistaken in supposing that nothing has ever been done upon this subject. I introduced a resolution during the last Congress, which was adopted by the House, referring the subject to the Judiciary Committee for inquiry.

Mr. THAYER. I said no act had been passed. That was my assertion. And now, sir, there is most intense zeal manifested that something shall be voted -voted, not done- to exterminate polygamy in Utah. Worst of all, it appears that this act of voting would seem to satisfy some consciences, even though this very vote should prolong the existence of that iniquitous institution. It would seem to satisfy some consciences - I will not call them stupid, or sluggish, or dead - that they voted against polygamy. Sir, if the ability of these gentlemen to execute were equal to their zeal to enact, we might almost say that omnipotence would be one of their weaknesses. But it is not proposed to execute; and there is no party in this country to-day, and there has been no party in this country during the last thirteen years, that would dare to vote bayonets and revolvers to shoot or stab polygamy out of Brigham Young and his followers. What, sir, do the Judiciary Committee ask us to do? What claim do they present for our votes in favor of this bill? What is claimed? Why, that the Congress of the United States should make an expression of opinion, so that the world may know that the United States of America are really opposed to polygamy! Really opposed to polygamy I How much better, Mr. Speaker, we shall stand before the nations of the earth, when we shall have really shown them -what they may now be in doubt about- that we are actually opposed to polygamy! When we shall have shown it, not by doing anything against the iniquity, but by a solemn vote, recorded upon the journals of this House!

Now, sir, I say that any such expression of sentiment is superfluous. There is no State in this Union that has not made polygamy a penal offence already; and what is the combined expression of the Representatives of these States, more than the individual expression of each of the States acting in its individual capacity? Do we, by this combined action, add anything to the force of all that separate action? Certainly not. The world understands now well enough that this country is opposed to polygamy, and it never will understand it any better



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by a vote of Congress, the whole effect of which will be to prolong the existence of that institution. Then, sir, as an expression of sentiment, this bill is superfluous. But more than that. It is urged by some as a penal statute. Will it be enforced? I say no; and I tell you that, should the bill pass, neither you nor I will ever live to see a party which will dare to vote money and instruct the President to use it in putting in operation and in enforcing the penal statute which this bill proposes.

Then, sir, what does it amount to? I say, as a penal statute it is powerless. I will not go into the argument now to show why it ought not to be enforced, or the cruelty of attempting to enforce it against these men, who never could understand why the bill was enacted.

I will not go into the argument about the expense of millions that it would cost this Government to enforce it; or that it would give the Mormons reason to charge that we have made use of persecution against them, driving them to the mountains and hunting them there like partridges, or that it would inevitably prolong the existence of the institution which it proposes to abolish. All these questions I pass by, for there is nobody here who claims that it is the purpose of any party to vote money or instructions to enforce this penal statute.

But, sir, it is said that the honor and authority of the United States must be vindicated. The honor and authority of the United States vindicated, indeed, by a law which its very framers admit is, from its very inception, a dead letter! Nobody here now dare stand up and pledge his party to enforce this law. I challenge any man of any party to do that. I claim that it a sham ab initio; that it is a false pretence; and I never will vote for a sham or a false pretence, by whatever man or I whatever party it may be brought into this House. I do not deal in such things, sir, especially upon practical questions like this now before us. The reasons that I have given are sufficient to govern my vote upon this bill, and that vote will be against it; that, as an expression of the moral sense of the country, it is superfluous; that, as a penal statute, it is powerless; that, as a vindication of the honor and authority of this Government, it is worse than futile; for it would bring both the honor and authority of the Government into ridicule and contempt.

Now, sir, if these are facts, and if that is the prospect before us, should this bill be elevated to the dignity of a law by our votes? Moral reformations should never be attempted by law, which can be accomplished without the aid of law. This would be true, even were the law proposed sure to elicit the contemplated object, even if it were a law made and enforced by the political community where the offence existed. What excuse, then, can gentlemen give for a law like this, sure not to accomplish the object contemplated, made by a non-resident power, and intended never to be enforced?

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us inquire whether some act cannot be done



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which shall prove a perpetual and insurmountable barrier to the progress of this gigantic monstrosity. I am happy to be able to say that I believe that a solution – a peaceful, quiet, easy, natural, and practical solution – of this question is now within our reach. I am happy in the belief that the gold mines of Pike's Peak and the silver mines of Carson Valley do now furnish us a solution of this vexed question of polygamy. I have therefore proposed an amendment to this bill, that the Territory of Utah, together with a part of Kansas and Nebraska, shall be divided into two land districts, in such a way that the Mormon people shall be divided nearly equally between the two.

Now, sir, what are the facts about population? I come now to an argument which addresses itself directly to the judgment of the House – an argument not of theories, but of facts. The Mormons, by the best intelligence, by the highest authority I can get, are to-day about forty thousand people. I have it from officers of the United States army who have been in Utah during the last two years, and they assure me that not more than one-seventh of this population of Mormons are voters. What are the facts in relation to the population of the two proposed land districts? I have the opinion of the Delegates from Jefferson, Kansas, and Nebraska, and numerous others, that there are now within the limits of the proposed land district of Jefferson forty thousand men, and that there are at least in that district twenty thousand voters; and we have it from papers last received from California, that there are now in Carson Valley at least thirty thousand men, and not less than fifteen thousand voters. I believe there has been a rapidity of increase of population in these districts which has no parallel in the history of this country; not even in the case of California. Why, sir, at the rate of increase now going on, it is confidently expected that at the next session of Congress these people will come here with the right to be admitted as sovereign States. Then, sir, you may defeat the policy of these Mormons at once, by erecting these land districts, which have already more than five times the voters of the Mormon population, and which population is rapidly increasing, while the number of Mormon voters is diminishing. With this prospect before us, is there any risk that Mormonism will not be exterminated by local law, provided we pass this amendment, constituting the land districts proposed? Would not a local law be much better to accomplish the purpose than a law made by a non-resident power? I contend that the law of a non-resident power is only fit to be laughed at and despised. The true authority, in my judgment, and the only authority worthy of being regarded, is the law that is made, approved, and enforced, by the people where it is law.

That local law is what Mormonism, polygamy, or any other crime, cannot evade. This non-resident law may do very well as capital for politicians; it may do for political pretences and shams; but it never will do for practice. I am not disposed to spend any time now in showing this House the inextricable difficulties



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and complications this precedent would lead us into, if adopted. There is no end of them.

Do gentlemen propose that Congress shall follow up this mode of reforming all abuses that may occur upon the public lauds of the United States? Shall we make laws against drunkenness, and profanity, and Sabbath-breaking, and larceny— in short, shall we make a complete criminal code for our public lands, and establish a police and judicial force sufficient to arrest and convict and punish all offenders on this immense area? If this is to be our policy, then this bill proposes a good beginning. We shall probably have enough to do for some time to come, without attempting at all to the legitimate purposes of the Government. Local law is the true remedy for these evils. The operation of such law, as contemplated in my amendment, will be sufficient for the speedy abolishment of polygamy.

Is it to be supposed that one hundred thousand miners at Pike's Peak, and the same number of miners at Carson Valley, without any women at all, will allow a monopoly of women at Salt Lake? [Laughter.] Sir, I do not agree with gentlemen who denounce these men in the Territories, these hardy pioneers, as men of no education, as men of no refinement, as men destitute of intelligence and moral power. I have never called them "runaways and outlaws." They are men of more vigor of body and of mind, of more heroism and enterprise, of more power of endurance, of more persistency, and of more character, than the people of the old States. They are also superior in intelligence to the average of the people in the old States. I doubt not, sir, that there are some educated men in Carson Valley, and some educated men in Pike's Peak; some who have read history, and some of them may have read Roman history. [Laughter.]

I feel perfectly secure, then, in the position that Mormonism and polygamy, and all things connected therewith, should be left to the local laws of the two laud districts which I propose, by the action of Congress, to establish. Now, sir, is it safe to leave polygamy to the cure of a democracy? Is it safe to leave it to a republican form of government, made by the people themselves, in these two land districts? Every man acquainted with the history of the world knows that polygamy never has existed under a democratic or republican form of government. Every man who knows anything, even without reading history, would decide beforehand that it never could exist under such a form of government while the sexes continue to be equal in numbers. Wherever it has existed — in Turkey, in Arabia, among the chiefs of central Africa, or among the aborigines of America — it has always been protected by absolute military despotism. It can be sustained under no other system of government.

Then I hold that the argument is conclusive, that, by subjecting polygamy to the action of the democracy of these two laud districts, it would most effectually put an end to it; and this is one reason why I shall vote for the amendment to the bill as I have proposed it.



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But it may be inquired, why we do not organize the Territories of Jefferson and Nevada, instead of simply constituting them land districts; why we do not pass an organic act. Now, sir.

I am going to give my own views upon this subject: and I am going to say, for the amendment which I have proposed, that it neither affirms nor denies the power of Congress to legislate for the Territories. But while pursuing that course, I still hold my own views upon the subject; and if inquired of why I would not vote for a Territorial organization, my answer is ready; that I am opposed to the whole policy of organizing Territories by this Federal Government. I say here and now, that I will never vote – as I believe I have never voted in the past – to organize any Territory under this Government; neither would I acquire another foot of land to be governed by the Congress of the United States, or to be sold by the authority of this Government. The purposes of this Government are few and simple, as has been before said in this Hall. It is no part of the purpose for which this Government was organized, to exercise non-resident jurisdiction, or traffic in real estate; and therefore I am for getting rid of the nuisance, and of confining the Government to its legitimate purposes as soon as we can possibly do it. Therefore, again, I am opposed to the organization of any more Territories, and of inaugurating again the old policy of the Government, which has led to all the sectional quarrels which have existed, and now exist, between the States of the Union. I tell you, we cannot afford to spend the time of this nation in quarrelling about these provinces, which the Constitution does not know. The Constitution knows nothing less than a State; and why should we be forever quarrelling about Territories? Sir, I am so much a popular-sovereignty man, that I deny that Congress can, by an organic act, bestow sovereignty upon the people of a Territory.

Mr. SMITH, of Virginia. Let me ask the gentleman a question. The gentleman says that the Constitution does not recognise anything else than a State. Then, what does he think of that clause of the Constitution which gives to Congress the power to dispose of the territory and other property of the United States?

Mr. THAYER. I ought to have said, as a political community. The Constitution speaks of territory as property, as land; but, sir, as a political community it knows nothing less than a State. As a member of Congress, I would not be wiser than the Constitution. I am opposed even to granting permission to any Territory to make any laws, or to manage its own affairs in its own way. Why should the citizens of Maine and Connecticut, of Georgia and South Carolina, and the other States, insult their equals in the Territories by the favor of granting them permission, through Congress, to govern themselves? Is a man who was a citizen of Iowa yesterday, and is today an inhabitant of Nebraska, less than the equal of him who remains a citizen and inhabitant of Iowa? How and why is his right of self-government impaired? No man can tell. If, then, he is the equal of any citizen of the



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States, it must be conceded that there is no occasion for the citizens of the States to graciously grant him equality of right.

No, sir; to grant permission to a Territory to make its. own laws, implies authority which never rightfully existed in Congress. It implies the same authority as to command or to withhold permission. I will never vote such an insult to my fellow-citizens in a Territory. They are my equals in every right under this Government, and have just as good reason and authority to grant permission to their fellow citizens in the States to govern themselves, as we in the States have to grant this permission by act of Congress to them.

Mr. SMITH, of Virginia. I want to ask another question. If Congress has no power over the territory of the United States, except as property – not as a political community – then Congress has no power over the people of a Territory.

Mr. THAYER. Exactly, sir. It may be that, under the construction of the Constitution which has obtained, Congress would really be decided to have the same right to govern the people that George HI had to govern these colonies. I deny that it has now or ever had any moral right to govern American citizens in the Territories. To be explicit: if Congress has that right, where did it get it? Congress is the servant and not the king of the people. The people, Mr. Speaker, in this country, are king. There is no other. Nobody else has the attribute of sovereignty. If Congress can dispense sovereignty, certainly Congress has either acquired that sovereignty or has created it. Nobody believes that Congress creates sovereignty. If Congress acquired it, then when and where did it acquire it? Even the Church of Rome, absolute as is her authority, professes to give a reason for what she has and what she dispenses. When that church sells indulgences, she declares that she only sells the superabundant merit of the saints, so that men that are not as good as they ought to be, may have their deficiencies made up by men who are better than they need to be. [Laughter.] I would like to know where this superabundant sovereignty comes from, that Congress can dispense it. Only think what a reservoir of sovereignty this Congress must be, which has dispensed or pretends to have dispensed sovereignty to twenty sovereign States since the formation of this Government, and has never had any sovereignty itself, except what it must have acquired from the sovereign people of this country. The fact is, Congress has never bestowed sovereignty upon one of them. It has only relinquished the sovereignty which it has usurped and withheld.

No, sir, this thing is a mistake. It is worse – it is a fiction; it is a fallacy. The gentleman from Alabama, [Mr. Curry,] the other day, wondered by what *hocus pocus*, by what legerdemain, that which is to-day public land becomes to-morrow a sovereignty. Public land does not become a sovereignty. Land never becomes a sovereignty. Men are the sovereigns.

If there is unoccupied public land to-day, and tomorrow there





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is a sovereignty upon it, I assure you that somebody has gone there – some citizen, who is himself so much above property that he alone is of more importance than all the public land that this Government ever did or ever will possess. He, sir, is the sovereign; and you disrobe him of his sovereignty because he has crossed a Hue and gone into a Territory. By what power, by what law, Congress being his servant – by what law can it be done? By just as good authority your coachman, sir, might put on your coat and hat, and command you to get upon the box and take the whip in hand, while he takes a seat inside the carriage.

But, sir, if the possession of land confers sovereignty, and if the sale of land implies the power to govern, I would like to know whether the selling of the products of the land does not give the right to govern the buyers? I would like to know whether the doctrine that the party, whether the Government or an individual, who sells land, thereby acquires the right to govern the purchasers of the land, is any more ridiculous than the assumption that the grain dealer who sells corn, the product of the land, thereby acquires the right to govern his customers? Such a grain dealer as this was Pharaoh, who bought his people with corn. When the years of famine had rendered the land unproductive, and therefore worthless, the basis of absolute sovereignty was changed from land to the products of the land. Sovereignty just as much attaches, and with just as good right, to the one as to the other. The assumption that it belongs to either, or to the owner of either, on account of possession, or of sale, is simply ridiculous.

Land is nothing but property. The fiction, that the possession of land gives sovereignty, and the right to govern people who are upon it, is a part of the old feudal system. We have everywhere connected with the fibers of this Government some of the relics of ancient tyranny. When William the Conqueror invaded and subdued England, he proclaimed that the fee of all the land on the island was in himself, and he parcelled it out amongst his retainers. Holding possession of the land, he then proclaimed that all the men who lived upon it were his slaves. And from the old feudal system we derive this ancient, this fallacious idea, that the possession of land by this Government gives it the power to govern anybody who shall buy the land. I have no sympathy with any such thing. I detest it now, and I shall detest it always, and use my influence against it.

Mr, Speaker, while I advocate these views, the amendment I propose commits no man who may vote for it to them; for that amendment neither affirms nor denies the power of Congress to legislate hereafter for these land districts which are thereby constituted. I hope I have succeeded in showing that the bill which is proposed will not accomplish the purpose which it professes to have in view. I hope I have succeeded in showing that we are able, by a natural and effective method, to accomplish these results. I might have spoken of the complications which this territorial policy is ever imposing



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upon the Government, and of the dangerous consolidation of power to which these complications inevitably lead. A Republic never can successfully govern provinces. Whenever it has attempted to do it, the history of the world has shown that it has not only failed, but it has been overthrown by that policy. The policy of acquiring and of governing provinces creates a necessity for an army and a navy. It is to make the President of the United States, to all intents and purposes, a king; and I am, therefore, for abolishing this policy as soon as may be.

You remember, sir, that it was upon this very mission of acquiring and governing provinces, that Julius Caesar had been in Gaul, when, returning, he crossed the Rubicon with his army, and overthrew the liberties of his country.

Similar to that has been the history of every Republic which has attempted to exercise nonresident jurisdiction – that has attempted to acquire and govern provincial dependencies. While I am willing to annex sovereignties at the right time, I protest against the acquisition of territory, to be governed or sold by Congress. I am for simplifying the operations of the Government in respect to the Territories. We have the land to sell. Let us provide for selling it; but beyond that I would not recommend action. Let the people take care of themselves. They are the sovereigns. Congress is their servant.

On assurances by Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar that the [John Brown](#) flap was over and that he was no longer in danger of arrest by Senator [James Murray Mason](#)'s special investigatory committee of the US Senate, [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy had returned to Concord, Massachusetts. Hoar proved to be quite mistaken as on this day US marshals appeared in Concord with a warrant for this conspirator's arrest. As Sanborn would later recount the incident, a police sergeant who knew that he had come back home from exile in [Canada](#) took four men and went that night to his home in Concord:<sup>114</sup>

An attempt was made to drag me in irons from my house here to Washington. This was on the night of 3 April 1860. On the next day, having been released from these wretches by my neighbors who acted under the laws of Massachusetts as a sheriff's posse to enforce a writ of habeas corpus issued by Judge Hoar, I appeared before the Supreme Court of this Commonwealth, and was declared at liberty to go where I pleased. I went home to my ordinary way of life, and was not further molested by Mason or Davis.

Senator [James Mason](#) would comment in regard to this altercation that [Sanborn](#), already in handcuffs, had been rescued by "a tumultuous body of people, whom I call a mob." [Anna Maria Whiting](#) in particular, bless her, got really physical during the struggle, fending off the deputies with a cane:

Annie Whiting got into the kidnapper's carriage so that they

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114. This illustration "Arrest and Rescue of Frank B. Sanborn, Esq., at Concord, Massachusetts, on the Night of April 3, 1860" is courtesy of the William Munroe Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library.



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could not put Sanborn in. One grabbed her and said, Get out. I won't, said Annie. I'll tear your clothes. Tear away, they said. We'll whip up the horses and make them run away if you don't get out. So let them run to the devil, I won't stir. She didn't budge until it was all over. Sanborn's schoolboys rushed about like heroes. After so long an interval, with no effort at arresting me, I had fairly concluded the Senate officials had given up their idea of taking me to Washington. This they would have done, had they been wise. But on the evening of April 3rd, after I had been out making calls in the village of Concord, and was sitting quietly in my study on the first floor, after nine o'clock, my door-bell rang. Julia had gone to bed. Sarah was in her room. Without anticipating any harm, I went down into the front hall in my robe and answered the bell. A young man presented himself, and handed me a note, which I stepped back to read by the light of the hall lamp. It said the bearer was a person deserving charity. When I looked up from reading the note, four men had entered my hall. One of them came forward and layed his hand on me, saying, I arrest you. I said, By what authority? If you have a warrant read it, for I will not go with you unless you show your warrant. He began to read the order of the Senate for my arrest. Sarah, who had feared, as I did not, what this visit meant, now rushed down the stairs, opened the other door of the hall, and began to cry out to the neighbors. Seeing they were likely to be interrupted in their mission, my five callers slipped a pair of handcuffs on my wrists and forced me from the house. I was young and strong and I resented this indignity. They had to lift me and carry me to the door, where my sister stood, screaming. I braced my feet against the doorposts and delayed them. I did the same at the posts of the veranda. The church bells were ringing a fire alarm, the people were gathering by tens. I braced my feet against the stone posts of the gateway, checking their progress once more. When the four rascals lifted me to insert me, feet foremost, in their covered hack, an anxious driver on the box, I braced myself against the sides of the carriage door and broke them in. They then realized it was my unfettered feet that made all this trouble, so one of the four grasped my feet and brought them together, so that I could no longer use them in resistance. They got me into the hack only as far as my knees, when my sister, darting forward, grasped the long beard of my footman and pulled with so much force he lost his grasp. My feet felt the ground again, outside the carriage. A great crowd had collected, among them Colonel Whiting and his daughter Annie. With his stout cane, the Colonel began to beat the horses. My bearers were left a rod or two behind the hack into which they had not been able to force me. Still they held me, hatless and in my evening slippers, in the street in front of my house. At that moment, my counsel, J.S. Keyes, appeared by my side, asking if I petitioned for a writ of Habeas Corpus. By all means, I told him. Keyes hurried over to Judge Hoar's house. Hearing the tumult, and suspecting what

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it was, he had already begun filling out a writ of personal replevin. In less than ten minutes, the writ was in the hands of Concord's deputy sheriff, John Moore, who made the formal demand on my captors to surrender their prisoner. Stupidly, they refused. So the sheriff called on the 150 men and women present to act as his posse comitatus, which some twenty of the men gladly did, and I was forcibly snatched from senatorial custody. At the same time, my Irish neighbors rushed upon them and forced them to take to their broken carriage, and make off toward Lexington, the way they had come. They were pursued by twenty or thirty of my townsmen, some of them as far as Lexington. I was committed to the custody of Captain George L. Prescott, and spent the night in his house, armed, for my better defense, with a six-shooter, which Mr. Bull, the inventor of the Concord grape and then chairman of the Selectmen, had insisted I should take. I slept peacefully all the rest of that night.



After Judge Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar had issued his writ and the marshals had gone away, arrangements were made for Sanborn to hide for the rest of the night with a pistol at Captain George L. Prescott's home, while [Henry Thoreau](#) spent the rest of the night at Sanborn's home so his sister [Sarah E. Sanborn](#) would not be alone.



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[Louisa May Alcott](#) would record: “Sanborn was nearly kidnapped for being a friend of John Brown; but his sister rescued him when he was handcuffed, and the scamps drove off. A meeting and general flurry.”

Here is [John Shepard Keyes](#)'s account of the incident:

Sanborn had I never doubted full knowledge of his plans, and Concord subscriptions had helped his cause without however knowing its purpose. So that when Mason of Virginia began in the U.S. Senate the investigation Sanborn was summoned to testify. He was afraid and unwilling to trust himself in Washington and refused to attend. He consulted with me, and I had a correspondence with Mason on the subject endeavoring to induce the comtee to take his deposition here. I think that was one object I had in going to Washington myself but do not recall any interview with Mason. At length the U.S. Marshal made the attempt to take Sanborn and carry him off as a witness. I was sitting quietly in my house of a moonlight evening when Grace Mitchell one of Sanborns scholars came wildly rushing in with the news that they were carrying him off. I ran to his house next to the high school house to find him handcuffed in the carry all with the 3 depy marshals holding him, and an excited crowd of 30 men & women holding the horse and stopping the road in front. Sanborn terribly excited, and waving frantically his manacles and calling for help and rescue I enquired of the officers who recognized me their purpose and authority which they gave and then telling the crowd to detain them till I got back, rushed off to Judge Hoar's house where I found him quietly smoking in his library to which the cries and shouts of the scene almost penetrated. I applied to him for a writ of Habeas Corpus for Sanborn and as soon as he understood the matter he granted it. I writing the petition therefore while he filled out the writ. Armed with this I hastened back to find the crowd swelled to a mob of hundreds, in which some Democrats had mingled trying to take the part of the officers, and getting roughly handled for so doing. Shouting for my old deputy Capt Moore, the crowd gave way he came forward served the writ by taking Sanborn from the wagon and releasing him from the officers and the handcuffs. They who were thoroughly alarmed for their safety, gladly drove off after hearing the writ saluted with a parting volley of stones & groans and when the town clerk had shoved the collector Col Holbrook into the gutter as the fit place for his pro slavery remarks, the women helped Sanborn to his house, the men walked off and when I got through a short consultation with him, and turned homeward Concord street were quiet and the excitement over save that Rufus Hosmer had fallen dead of heart disease in the tumult that had been going on there. My coolness and legal instinct alone prevented a dreadful row. Carleton & Freeman & Coolidge the officers were armed, and but for my prompt interference would have made sad work and a terrible result, instead of the quiet surrender I brought about by means of the writ. It was the best instance of presence of mind I can recall



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in my whole experience! Byron like, I woke the next morning to find the newspapers full of the encoutre and myself famous for my interposition. In the excited state of feeling over slavery and the John Brown invasion, it was almost a declaration of war. I appeared before the Supreme Court hastily collected in full bench with Gov. Andrew as senior counsel for Sanborn while the Marshal with the U.S. District Atty was on the other side. The Court House was crammed the excitement red hot, I suggested the point when the warrant was produced under which the officers were acting that as it was addressed only to the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate, he could not deputize his authority to a bailiff for want of any such direction in the warrant and therefore the service by such bailiff was utterly void and nugatory, and cited the decision of our Supreme Court to that effect in the case of a writ directed to a sheriff and served by a constable. Charley Woodbury the Dist Atty, replied. Andrew closed and the court after consultation sustained the point and discharged Sanborn. The crowd cheered Sanborn was the hero of the hour, and though for a month he had been hiding in Concord garrets and writing to me from Patinas, he must make the most of his notoriety by the aid of newspapers, interviews, and cards of thanks. I came home at night to find Concord stirred to its depths, with reporters and emissaries of all kinds, and more foolish stories in circulation of attacks, and captures, than could be imagined— The papers here and in N.Y. Washington were filled with it. Congress got excited, Mason threatened and it seemed as if war might actually begin. Sanborn was carefully guarded, and the story that the Marines were to be sent out in the night to take him, came so straight from Mrs Jackson who was connected with the Emerson & Bartlett family that videlles [?] were sent out mounted to watch and give the alarm. Altogether it was another 19th of April and I sat on horseback for hours on the Lincoln hill watching. I had the officers arrested brought to Concord tried before Ball Justice for assault & battery, & bound over to criminal term. Brought a suit for Sanborn in the Supreme Court for \$10000 damages, and with the Atty. Gen appeared in the U.S. Court where the comtees case was carried by Woodbury & in short had lots of business growing out of the affair. The Legislature took it up, and Congress got excited over it, and it was a great row! Meantime politics must be attended to and I went to the State Convention at Worcester where I helped elect the Andrew ticket for delegates to Chicago, and was chosen the member of the State Convention from the Midx Senatorial District, also was chosen with Sweetzer at the District Convention in Concord a district delegate to Chicago after a hard fight, in which my friends rallied to pay me for my defeat as sheriff, and thus I was busy again in political



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movements.



**J.S. KEYES AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

May 9, Wednesday: The New-York Tribune had an advert for James Redpath's ECHOES OF HARPER'S FERRY, a volume about the raid by Captain John Brown on Harpers Ferry which contained Henry Thoreau's "A Plea for Captain John Brown" and his "Remarks at Concord on the Day of the Execution of John Brown."

J(ames) M(atthew) Barrie was born in Kirriemuir, Scotland.

Samuel Griswold Goodrich, best known under the pen name "Peter Parley," died in New-York.

Sarah Rotch Arnold died at New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Thoreau was being written to by L.L. & C.H. Smith in New-York, for a large supply of plumbago.

*New York May 9<sup>th</sup>/60  
Mr H. D. Thoreau  
Dear Sir  
Please*



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*send as soon as possible*  
*One Hundred pounds*  
*of Black Lead.*  
*Yours Truly,*  
*L.L. & C. H. Smith*  
*Late L. [J.] Smith*



May 9. River five and three fourths inches below summer level.

I think I heard a bobolink this forenoon.

A boy brought me what I take to be a very red *Rana sylvatica*, caught on the leaves the 6th.

Have had no fire for more than a fortnight, and no greatcoat since April 19th.

Fir balsam bloom. Sugar maple blossoms are now a tender yellow; in prime, say 11th. Thousands of dandelions along the meadow by the Mill Brook, behind R. W. E.'s, in prime, say 10th. [By the 18th are much concealed by grass.]

P.M. — To Flint's Pond.

It is a still, cloudy, thoughtful day.

Oven-bird, how long? In Ebby Hubbard's wood, I climb to a hole in a dead white pine, a dozen feet up, and see by the gray fur about the edge of the hole that it probably has been used by the gray squirrel. Maryland yellow-throat.

We sit by the shore of Goose Pond. The tapping of a woodpecker sounds distinct and hollow this still cloudy day, as not before for a long time, and so do the notes of birds, as if heard against a background for a relief, e.g. the cackle of the pigeon woodpecker, the note of the jay, the scratching in the dry leaves of three or four chewinks near us (for they are not shy), about the pond, under the blueberry bushes. The water is smooth. After sitting there a little while, I count the noses of twenty frogs within a couple of rods, which have ventured to come to the surface again, — so quietly that I did not see one come up. At the fox-hole by Britton's Hollow there are some three cart-buck-loads of sand cast out.

That large pine-tree moss that makes beds on the ground, now fruiting, when I brush my hand over its fruit is surprisingly stiff and elastic like wires.

Yellow lily pads begun to spread out on some pools, but hardly yet on the river; say 10th on river.

Golden robin.

The wall by the road at the bars north of Cyrus Smith's chestnut grove is very firmly bound together by the *Rhus Toxicodendron* which has overrun it, for twenty feet in length. Would it not be worth the while to encourage its growth for this purpose, if you are not afraid of being poisoned? It runs up by small root-like stems, which cling close and flat to the wall, and which intertwine and seem to take a new start from the top of the wall (as from the ground), where the stems are generally larger than below, so that it is in fact a row of this rhus growing on the top of the wall to some three or four feet above it, and by its rooty stems binding the stones very firmly together. How much better this than sods on a wall!

Of that early *sedge* in Everett's meadow, [*Carex stricta*.] the top-most spikes are already effete; say a week, then. I see a second amelanchier with a distinct pink or rosaceous tinge like an apple blossom. Elm seed has begun to fall.

Cattle going up country for ten days past. [Yes, and the 14th.] You must keep your gate shut.





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May 26, Saturday: The federal government of the United States appropriated \$40,000 to carry out the Act of March 3, 1819, and subsequent acts (STATUTES AT LARGE, XII. 21).

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

The Reverend [Samuel Joseph May](#) had an opportunity to discuss his latest attitudes toward violence vs nonviolence with his brother-in-law [Bronson Alcott](#) and the widow [Mary Ann Day Brown](#), in preparation for an oration he was scheduled to give before the American Peace Society.

THE ALCOTT FAMILY



May 26. Overcast, rain-threatening; wind northeast and cool.

9 A.M.—To Easterbrooks Country.

*Carex lanuginosa*, Smith's shore, say three or four days. *C. pallescens* (?), long-stalked, staminate, Channing's shore, high. *C. pallescens* var. *undulata*, rather spreading, common, as in Clark's field from opposite my old house. *C. polytrichoides* well out, say a few days, Botrychium Swamp. Melons have peeped out two or three days. Our pink azalea.

5 P.M.—River five eighths of an inch below summer level.

May 27, Sunday: [Giuseppe Garibaldi](#)'s army entered Palermo.

Kibrisli Mehmed Pasha replaced Mütercim Mehmed Rüstü Pasha as Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire.

[Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: “I heard this morning a sermon on the Holy Spirit — good but insufficient. Why was I not edified? Because there was no unction. Why was there no unction? Because Christianity from this rationalistic point of view is a Christianity of dignity, not of humility. Penitence, the struggles of weakness, austerity, find no place in it. The law is effaced, holiness and mysticism evaporate; the specifically Christian accent is wanting. My impression is always the same — faith is made a dull poor thing by these attempts to reduce it to simple moral psychology. I am oppressed by a feeling of inappropriateness and malaise at the sight of philosophy in the pulpit. “They have taken away my Saviour, and I know not where they have laid him;” so the simple folk have a right to say, and I repeat it with them. Thus, while some shock me by their sacerdotal dogmatism, others repel me by their rationalizing laicism. It seems to me that good preaching ought to combine, as Schleiermacher did,



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perfect moral humility with energetic independence of thought, a profound sense of sin with respect for criticism and a passion for truth.

The free being who abandons the conduct of himself, yields himself to Satan; in the moral world there is no ground without a master, and the waste lands belong to the Evil One.

The poetry of childhood consists in simulating and forestalling the future, just as the poetry of mature life consists often in going backward to some golden age. Poetry is always in the distance. The whole art of moral government lies in gaining a directing and shaping hold over the poetical ideals of an age.”

In a letter to her sister Anna “Meg” Alcott Pratt, [Louisa May Alcott](#) described the family’s reception for the Browns:

Thursday we set our house [[Orchard House](#)] in order, and at two the rush began. It had gone abroad that Mr. M [the Reverend [Samuel Joseph May](#)] and Mrs. Captain Brown [[Mary Ann Day Brown](#)] were to adorn the scene, so many people coolly came who were not invited, and who had no business there. People sewed and jabbered till Mrs. Brown, with Watson Brown’s widow [Isabella Thompson Brown] and baby came; then a levee took place. The two pale women sat silent and serene through the chatter; and the bright-eyed handsome baby received the homage of the multitude like a little king, bearing the kisses and praises with the utmost dignity. He is named Frederick Watson Brown, after his murdered uncle and father [[Frederick Brown](#) was killed in 1856 in [“Bleeding Kansas”](#), [Watson Brown](#) at [Harpers Ferry](#)], and is a fair, heroic looking baby with a fine head, and serious eyes that look about him as if saying, “I am a Brown! Are these friends or enemies?” I wanted to cry once at the little scene the unconscious baby made. Some one caught and kissed him rudely; he didn’t cry, but looked troubled, and rolled his great eyes anxiously around for some familiar face to reassure him with its smile. His mother was not there; but though many hands were stretched to him, he turned to Grandma Bridge, and putting out his little arms to her as if she was a refuge, laughed and crowed as he had not done before when she danced him on her knee. The old lady looked delighted, and Freddy patted the kind face, and cooed like a lawful descendant of that pair of ancient turtle doves.

When he was safe back in the study, playing alone at his mother’s feet, C. and I went and worshipped in our own way at the shrine of [John Brown](#)’s grandson, kissing him as if he were a little saint, and feeling highly honored when he sucked our fingers, or walked on us with his honest little red shoes, much the worse for wear.

Well, the baby fascinated me so that I forgot a raging headache and forty gabbling women all in full clack. Mrs. Brown, Sen., is a tall stout woman, plain but with a strong, good face, and a natural dignity that showed she was something better than a “lady” though she did drink out of her saucer and used the plainest speech.

The younger woman [Isabella Thompson Brown] had such a patient, heart-broken face, it was a whole [Harpers Ferry](#) tragedy in a





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look. When we got your letter, Mother [Abba Alcott] and I ran into the study to read it. Mother read aloud, for there were only C, A, I and Mrs. Brown Jr. in the room. As she read the words that were a poem in their simplicity and happiness, the poor young widow sat with tears rolling down her face; for I suppose it brought back her own wedding-day, not two years ago, and all the while she cried the baby laughed and crowed at her feet as if there was no trouble in the world.

The preparations had been made for twenty at the utmost; so when forty souls with the usual complement of bodies appeared, we grew desperate, and our neat little supper turned out a regular "tea fight". A., C, B, and I rushed like comets to and fro trying to fill the multitude that would eat fast and drink like sponges. I filled a big plate with all I could lay hands on, and with two cups of tea, strong enough for a dozen, charged upon Mr. E [[Waldo Emerson](#)] and Uncle S [the Reverend [Samuel Joseph May](#)] telling them to eat, drink, and be merry, for a famine was at hand. They cuddled into a corner and, feeling that my mission was accomplished, I let the hungry wait and the thirsty moan for tea while I picked out and helped the regularly Antislavery set.

We got through it but it was an awful hour; and Mother wandered in her mind, utterly lost in a grove of teapots, while B. pervaded the neighborhood demanding hot water, and we girls sowed cake broadcast through the land.

When the plates were empty and the teapots dry, people wiped their mouths and confessed at last that they had done. A conversation followed, in which Grandpa B. and EPP [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody] held forth, and Uncle and Father [[Bronson Alcott](#)] mildly upset the world, and made a new one in which every one desired to take a place. Dr. Bartlett [[Dr. Josiah Bartlett](#)], Mr. B., Thoreau [[Henry Thoreau](#)], etc, appeared and the rattle continued till nine, when some Solomon suggested that the Alcotts must be tired, and everyone departed by C. and S. We had a polka by Mother and Uncle, the lancers by C. and B. and an etude by S., after which scrabblings of feast appeared and we drained the dregs of every cup, all cakes and pies we gobbled up, etc., then peace fell upon us, and our remains were interred decently.

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May 27. Fire in house again.

The *Sylvia striata* are the commonest bird in the street, as I go to the post-office, for several days past. I see six (four males, two females) on one of our little fir trees; are apparently as many more on another close by. The white bars on the wings of both sexes are almost horizontal. I see them thus early and late on the trees about our houses and other houses the 27th and 28th and 29th also,—peach trees, etc., but especially on the firs. They are quite tame. I stand within seven or eight feet while they are busily pecking at the freshly bursting or extending glaucous fir twigs, deliberately examining them on all sides, and from time to time one utters a very fine and sharp, but faint tse tse, tse tse, tse tse, with more or less of these notes. I hear the same in the woods. Examining the freshly starting fir twigs, I find that there are a great many lice or aphides amid the still appressed leaflets or leaves of the buds, and no doubt they are after these. Occasionally a summer yellowbird is in company with them, about the same business. They, the black-polls, are very numerous all over the town this spring. The



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female has not a black, but rather, methinks, a slate-colored crown, and is a very different bird,—more of a yellowish brown.

*Eleocharis acicularis*, not long, on the low exposed bank of the river; if [?] it is that that greens the very low muddy banks.

J. Farmer found a marsh hawk's nest on the 16th,—near the Cooper's hawk nest,—with three fresh eggs.

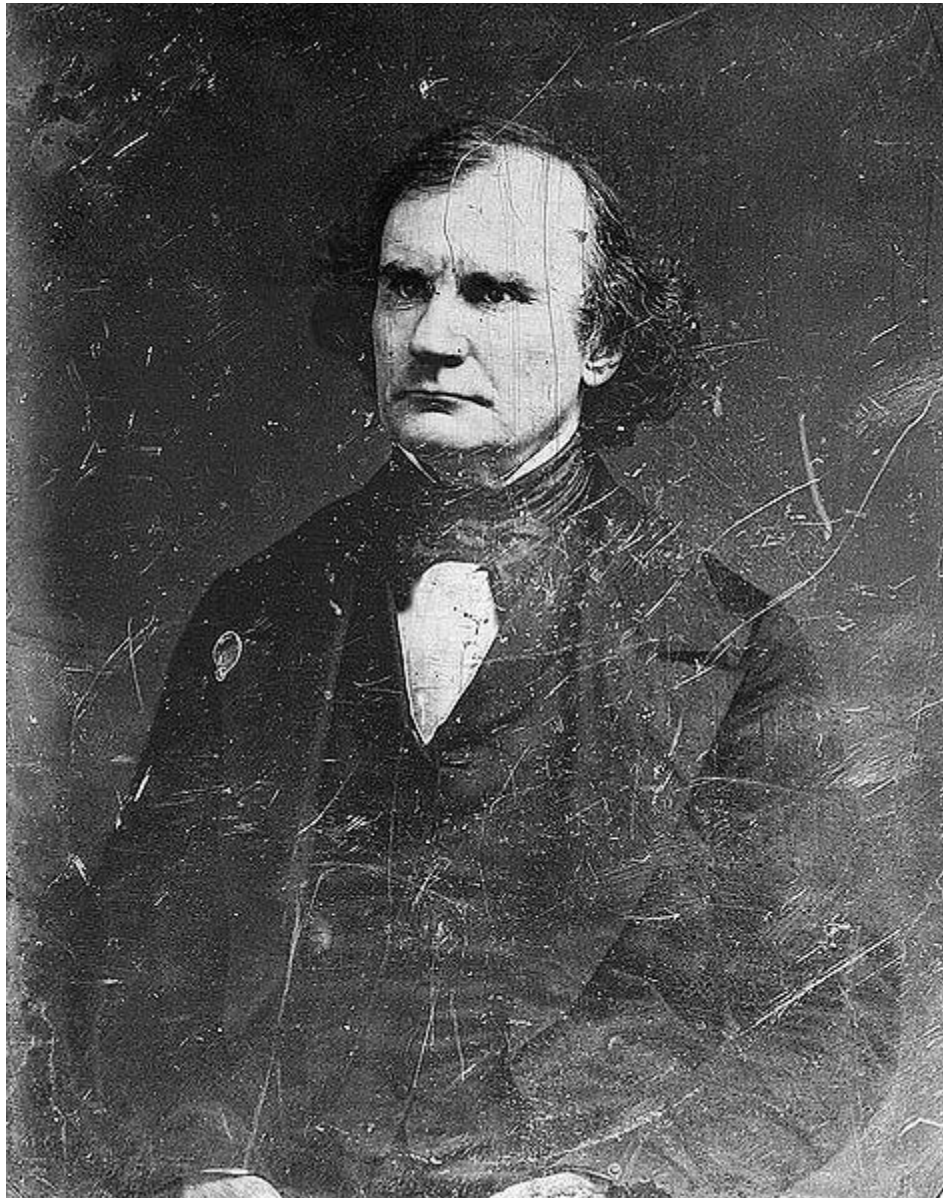


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June 15, Friday: Missouri state Governor Jackson, and other southern sympathizers, evacuated Jefferson City, the Missouri state capital.

The select investigatory committee of the [Secret "Six"](#) affair, chaired by Virginia Democratic Senator [James Murray Mason](#) submitted its final report to the US Senate, and this report was recorded in the [Congressional Globe](#) of the 36th Congress, 1st Session, Part IV, beginning on page 3,006.





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Senators Mason, [Jefferson Davis](#), and Graham N. Fitch, constituting the majority, reported that: “The invasion



(to call it so) by [John Brown](#) and his followers at [Harpers Ferry](#) was in no sense of that character. It was simply the act of lawless ruffians, under the sanction of no public or political authority distinguishable only from ordinary companies by the ulterior ends in contemplation by them, and by the fact that the money to maintain the expedition, and the large armament they brought with them, had been contributed and furnished by the citizens of other states of the union, under circumstances that must continue to jeopardy the safety and peace of the southern states, and against which congress has no power to legislate. If the several states, whether from motives of policy or a desire to preserve the peace of the union, if not from fraternal feeling, do not hold it incumbent on them, after the experience of the country, to guard in future by appropriate legislation against occurrences similar to the one here inquired into, the committee can find no guarantee elsewhere for the security of peace between the states of the union.”

The report may seem anticlimactic, if one presumes that the Senator had been intent on fixing the blame for an attempt to begin a servile insurrection. However, if one presumes instead that the agenda of the Senator had been to reassure himself that the [John Brown](#) raid on the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#) had been **merely intended to key a futile servile insurrection**, a race war between whites and non-whites which of course the whites would win in short order with minimal disruption (since they had an all-white federal army and all-white state militia units at their disposal, with artillery and training and funding), and that there had been no direct federal involvement, to reassure himself **that the raid had not been intended to set off another class war of poor whites against rich whites**, a repeat of the immensely dangerous Bacon’s Rebellion of the 17th Century, and that the federal government had not been an instigator of this — then the reassuring report of this Select Committee on the Invasion of Harpers Ferry does not seem at all anticlimactic.<sup>115</sup>

This final report might as well have been exceedingly brief, “Don’t ask and we won’t have to know,” except that a report that was uncharacteristically brief might have aroused suspicion.<sup>116</sup>

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115. Joel Silbey has contended, in “The Civil War Synthesis in American History,” that postbellum American historians have been misconstruing antebellum American politics by viewing them in conjunction with our knowledge of the bloodbath that followed. It is only after the fact that we can “know” that the US Civil War amounted to a sectional dispute, North versus South. We avoid learning that before the fact, it was undecided whether this conflict was going to shape up as a race conflict, a class conflict, or a sectional conflict. We avoid knowing that the raid on Harpers Ferry might have resulted in a race war, in which peoples of color would be exterminated in order to create an all-white America, or might have resulted in a class war, in which the laboring classes might have first destroyed the plantation owners’ equity by killing his slaves, and then gone on to purge the nation of the white plantation owners themselves, with their privileged-class endowments.



June 15. 2 P.M.—River four and one half above summer level.

For some time I have not heard toads by day, [But rarely.] and not for a long time in numbers; yet they still ring at night. Perhaps it is entirely a matter of temperature,—that in June and maybe the latter half of May (?) they require the coolness of the evening to arouse them. The hylodes appear to have done. I paddle to Clamshell.

Notice the down of the white willow near the bridge, twenty rods off, whitening Sassafras Shore for two or three rods like a dense white foam. It is all full of little seeds not sprouted, is as dense as fur, and has first blown fifteen rods overland. This is a late willow to ripen, but the black willow shows no down yet, *as I notice*. It is very conspicuously white along the shore, a foot or two wide,—a dense downy coat or fleece on the water. Has blown northeast.

See froth about the base of some grass in a meadow. The large early wool-grass of the meadows will shed pollen in a day or two—can see stamens—on Hosmer's Flat shore. This it is grows in circles.

As I stood there I heard that peculiar hawk-like (for rhythm) but more resonant or clanging kind of scream which I may have heard before this year, plover-like, indefinitely far,—over the Clamshell plain. After proceeding half a dozen rods toward the hill, I heard the familiar willet note of the upland plover [**Upland Sandpiper** ■ *Bartramia longicauda*] and, looking up, saw one standing erect—like a large tell-tale, or chicken with its head stretched up—on the rail fence. After a while it flew off southwest and low, then wheeled and went a little higher down the river. Of pigeon size, but quick quivering wings. Finally rose higher and flew more or less zigzag, as if uncertain where it would alight, and at last, when almost out of sight, it pitched down into a field near Cyrus Hubbard's. It was the same note I heard so well on Cape Cod in July, '55, and probably the same I heard in the Shawsheen valley, May 15, 1858. I suspect, then, that it breeds here.

The button-bush is now fairly green.



The *Carex stricta* tufts are now as large as ever, and, the culms falling over, they are like great long-haired heads, now drooping around the great tussocks. I know of no other sedge that make so massive and conspicuous a tussock, yet with a slender leaf. This the one that reflects the peculiar glaucous sheen from its bent surfaces.

The turtles are apparently now in the midst of their laying. I go looking for them, to see where they have left the water for this purpose. See a snapping turtle whose shell is about ten inches long making her hole on the top

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116. The report as it exists seems, unlike the Warren Report, never to have raised anyone's suspicions, despite the fact that it is inherently more dubious than any bullet theory the Warren Commission came up with in their foreordained determination to discover and proclaim that no foreign government had been involved in the assassination of JFK. Strange, huh? See Keith A. Sutherland's "The Senate Investigates Harpers Ferry," *Prologue* 8 (Winter 1996):192-207 and "Senate. Select Committee on the Harpers Ferry Invasion." *MASS VIOLENCE IN AMERICA: INVASION AT HARPERS FERRY* (reprint NY: Arno Press, 1969).



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of the sand-bank at the steam-mill site, within four rods of the road. She pauses warily at sound of my boat, but I should have mistaken her for a dark stone if she had [not] lifted her snout above her shell. I went to her as she lay and hissed by the hole at 4 P. M. It was about three and a half inches across, and not perpendicular but chiefly on one side; say five inches deep (as yet), and four plus inches wide beneath, but only about one inch of the bottom exposed when you looked straight down,—in short, like the common *Emys picta*'s hole. She had copiously wet the ground before or while digging, as the *picta* does. Saw two or three similar holes made by her afterward. There was her broad track (some ten inches wide) up the sandy or gravelly bank, and I saw where she had before dug, or begun to dig, within a rod of this, but had retreated to the river. I withdrew to the bridge to observe her (not having touched her), but she took the occasion to hasten to the river.

A thunder-shower in the north goes down the Merrimack.

We have had warmer weather for several days, say since 12th. A new season begun,—daily baths, thin coat, etc. [Heat probably about 85° at 2 P.M. Vide (below).]

The bullfrogs now *commonly* trump at night, and the mosquitoes are now really troublesome.



Early Summer: [The Alcott family](#) hosted a reception for [Mary Ann Day Brown](#).



20 people were invited and 42 attended. Evidently the ladies, instigated by [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#), presented a bedquilt or comforter to Mrs. Brown, hand inscribed with appropriate mottoes, for we have a letter written on a Sunday during this period by Annie Bartlett, 23-year-old daughter of [Dr. Josiah Bartlett](#) of Concord,<sup>117</sup> to her soldier brother Ned, speaking of such an appropriate gift:

*Miss Sophia Thoreau has been round for all the ladies to make a square for a bedquilt or comforter to be given to Mrs. John Ossawatomie Brown the center of which must be white so the ladies can write their names and a line of poetry or prose from scripture or elsewhere. Florry and Annie Keys have made theirs and have written "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." Emmie doesn't like the writing, but George said he wrote on hers, "Blessed are the peacemakers (piece-makers)." Wasn't that a good joke. So was Florry's but I don't think she thought of it.*

---

117. We can see here that though the Bartletts didn't approve of Henry, they didn't have such a problem regarding [Sophia](#).



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Summer: [Edwin Morton](#), back from [Switzerland](#), commenced the study of law in [Plymouth](#).

[Gerrit Smith](#), discharged from the Utica Insane Asylum, was expressing great admiration for [John Brown](#) while explaining that he had never become aware of Brown's plans.



→ Our national birthday, Wednesday the 4th of July: [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s 56th birthday.



[Henry Thoreau](#) had been invited to speak at the [John Brown](#) Memorial Celebration in [North Elba, New York](#) on the 1st anniversary of the symbolic day on which the raid on the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#) had been intended to go down. (The secretary of the meeting, [Richard Josiah Hinton](#), had stopped off in Concord on his way in order to pick up a copy of something that Thoreau had written for the occasion, so it could be read *in absentia* at the meeting.)

On an entirely appropriate day for a bloodthirsty and inspired patriot citizen, [John Brown](#) was therefore being celebrated *in absentia* in North Elba NY, and Thoreau's "The Last Days of John Brown" was being read *in absentia* by R.J. Hinton.



But now there is Charles Joyner's "'Guilty of Holiest Crime': The Passion of John Brown" in Paul Finkelman, ed. HIS SOUL GOES MARCHING ON: RESPONSES TO JOHN BROWN AND THE HARPERS FERRY RAID (Charlottesville VA: UP of Virginia, 1995, pages 296-334, page 324): Relying upon the Bradford Torrey and Franklin B. Sanborn edition of THE WRITINGS OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU published in 1894 and 1895 and reprinted in 1906, Volume X, pages 237-48, Joyner writes:



On Independence Day, Henry David Thoreau spoke at Brown's burial place. "The North, I mean the LIVING North, was suddenly all transcendental," he noted. "It went beyond the human law, it went beyond the apparent failure, and recognized eternal justice and glory." Thoreau echoed Emerson's disparagement of those who



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failed to see Brown's nobility. "When a noble deed is done, who is likely to appreciate it? Those who are noble themselves," he declared. "How can a man behold the light who has no inward light?" Thoreau asked. Brown's detractors, he charged, could not even **recite** poetry, let alone write it. "Show me a man who feels bitterly towards John Brown, and let me hear what noble verse he can repeat. He'll be as dumb as if his lips were stone."

The Alexandria, Virginia Gazette published a chronology of notable 4th-of-July events occurring in that town from 1800 to 1860. (I haven't seen this list, but presumably, the last item on this list would have been: "In 1860, the Alexandria, Virginia Gazette published a chronology of notable 4th-of-July events occurring in that town from 1800 to 1860.")

In Jamestown, New York, the Museum Society, made up of children between the ages of ten and fifteen, took charge of the celebration because most of the town adults were off in Randolph, New York, celebrating.

CELEBRATING OUR B-DAY



July 4. Gentle rain in the night (last).

The white pine shoot which on the 19th of June had grown sixteen and a quarter inches and on the 27th twenty and three quarters is now twenty-three and an eighth inches long.

2 P.M.—Look at springs toward Dugan's and White Pond.

Standing on J.P. Brown's land, south side, I observed his rich and luxuriant uncut grass-lands northward, now waving under the easterly wind. It is a beautiful Camilla, sweeping like waves of light and shade over the whole breadth of his land, like a low steam curling over it, imparting wonderful life to the landscape, like the light and shade of a changeable garment, waves of light and shade pursuing each other over the whole breadth of the landscape like waves hastening to break on a shore. It is an interesting feature, very easily overlooked, and suggests that we are wading and navigating at present in a sort of sea of grass, which yields and undulates under the wind like water; and so, perchance, the forest is seen to do from a favorable position.

None of his fields is cut yet.

Early, there was that flashing light of waving pine in the horizon; now, the Camilla on grass and grain.

Juncus bufonius, probably several days in some places.

The sedgy hollows, table-lands, and frosty places in the woods now most beautiful, the sedge most fresh and yellowish-green, a soft, dry bed to recline on. For example, that place south of Ledum Swamp, the sedge, especially in the old path, falling every way like cowlicks on an unkempt head. When we enter it from the west, with the sun shining between thundery clouds, it is all lit with a blaze of yellow light, like a pasture on Mt. Washington, nearer the sun than usual.

How beautiful the dark-green oak leaves now! How dark the chincapin oak leaves! Now the pines are almost indistinguishable by color amid the deciduous trees.

The large johnswort now begins to be noticed generally,—a July yellow.

Scared up a young bobolink, which flies a couple of rods only.

A few toads still ring at evening, and I still notice, on the rocks at White Pond, the pine pollen yellowing them, though it fell some time ago.

7 P.M., river is one and three eighths above summer level.





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July 27, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#)'s address "The Last Days of [John Brown](#)" was printed in The Liberator.

The New-York Weekly Tribune reported on [Thoreau](#)'s address "The Last Days of John Brown."

[Thoreau](#) billed Welch, Bigelow & Company for plumbago.

*Concord July 27<sup>th</sup> 1860*  
*Messrs Welch, Bigelow, & Co*  
*Below you will find my bill*  
*for Plumbago. I will thank you to*  
*send a draft for the amount on a*  
*Boston bank, as heretofore— Trusting*  
*that you will not require me to wait so long[,] without explanation,*  
*as the last time, I remain*  
*Yrs truly*  
*Henry D. Thoreau*

*Concord July [2]7<sup>th</sup> 1860*  
*Messrs Welch Bigelow & Co*  
*Bought of Henry D. Thoreau*  
*Twenty-four lb of Plumbago \$36.00*  
*Sent April 27<sup>th</sup> — — — —*  
*Rec<sup>d</sup> Pay<sup>t</sup>*

In regard to the Wisconsin citizen being held in federal detention for having helped an escaped slave, the news editor Sherman M. Booth, the Ripon, Wisconsin Weekly Times, a Republican paper, printed an editorial posing disturbing questions:

The people want to know why Judge Miller and Marshal Lewis haven't been made to answer before our State courts for the defiant position they occupy toward the State laws. They want to know, too, why, upon the decision of the Court Commissioner at Racine that he could not act until application had been made to every State judicial officer in Milwaukee, and if refused - why such application had been refused - why such application was not made to every State judicial officer in Milwaukee, and if refused then presented at Racine or elsewhere. The people have waited long and impatiently, asking why these things have not been done. There may be good reasons why they have not, but if there are not one in a thousand has any knowledge of them. In short we want to know if there [are] any legal, available means of redress; we want to see some evidence that there is good grit enough somewhere to carry on the contest with energy;



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and then it will be in point to talk about raising money.



Booth's friends and supporters were developing an extra-legal resolution: a rescue. In 1902, O.H. LaGrange would confess the origins of their plan to free the federal prisoner:

In June, 1860, Edward Daniels [Professor of Geology at Ripon College] suggested to me that Sherman M. Booth, who was confined in the custom house at Milwaukee under sentence of imprisonment for participating in the rescue of the fugitive slave Glover, ought to be released. On July 3, following, I met Daniels and others at Milwaukee, but our plans for the release became known and a squad of United States marines was brought to the custom house to guard the prisoner. It was then decided that I alone should remain in Milwaukee and make a farcical demonstration to mislead the guards and thus prepare for the success of a future attempt to release their prisoner. Early on the morning of the 4th, I went under the window of the second-story room, where Booth was confined, and called out to him to throw down the manuscript of his speech with a cord, and as I could not read his handwriting, his wife read it aloud to me and I copied it. About noon I conducted Mrs. Booth and her friend, Madam Ancke, to a shelter near where a crowd had assembled under Booth's window to hear his 4th of July oration, which had been advertised in his paper. The uniforms of the marines showed at the barred window. I called upon Judge Byron Paine [Justice of the Supreme Court] whom I saw in the audience, to read the manuscript which I held in my hand. He replied: "Read it yourself." I then nominated him for president and Fredricks [G.W. Frederick, one of the inner circle of the conspirators] for secretary of the meeting, declared them elected, and after a few words of introduction, read Booth's speech.

After the reading I made some incoherent remarks about releasing the prisoner, looked for a ladder, and assured the people that the marines would not resist us. I had made the feint as agreed, and a good man, named Hargrave, from Ripon[,] and some others thought I was in earnest, and would have followed had I led. They probably felt humiliated by my inconsequential conduct, but I was satisfied when the newspapers ridiculed me next morning that I had misled them and the guards. Carter's description of the events on July 4 is consistent with LaGrange's account, differing primarily in characterizing his friend's speech as an "eloquent address" rather than as "incoherent remarks:" On the fourth of July posters were placarded about the streets of Milwaukee calling "Freemen to the Courthouse at 2 o'clock. Booth will address the people from his window in the jail." A large



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crowd assembled. O.H. LaGrange of Ripon, mounted the stone wall under the jail window, and stated that Mr. Booth was not permitted to make the address, but that the manuscript had been conveyed to him, and he would read it to the people. The address was an able and inspiring appeal for the cause in which Booth claimed to be suffering martyrdom, and it elicited great applause. It was followed by an eloquent address by La Grange. Referring to the encroachments of the slave power in recent years, he said: "There is one more decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in reserve, giving the master power to hold his chattels in every state of our Union. If this fails to awaken us, the spirit of our fathers has departed from our government, the torpor of death has fastened upon our body politic, and the crack of doom could not break our slumbers." He closed by proposing cheers for Lincoln and Hamlin, which were given with a will.



July 27, Friday: A.M. – Pretty heavy rain last night.

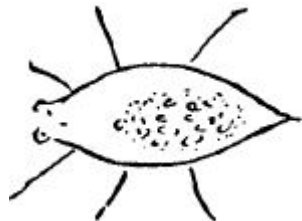
The day after a heavy rain, I can detect all the poor or sappy shingles on my neighbor's low roof which I overlook, for they, absorbing much water and not drying for a long time, are so many black squares spotting the gray roof.

2 P.M. – Sail and paddle down river.

The water has begun to be clear and sunny, revealing the fishes and countless minnows of all sizes and colors, this year's brood.

I see healthy blossoms of the front-rank polygonum just fairly begun.

I see running on the muddy shore under the pontederia a large flat and thin-edged brown bug (with six legs), some seven eighths of an inch long, pointed behind; with apparently its eggs, fifty or sixty in number, large and dark-colored, standing side by side on their ends and forming a very conspicuous patch which covers about a third of its flat upper surface.



I remove one with my knife, and it appears to stand in a thick glutinous matter. It runs through the water and mud, and falls upon its back a foot or more from my hand without dislodging them.

See, twenty rods or more down-stream, four or five young ducks, which appear already to be disturbed by my boat. So, leaving that to attract their attention, I make my way alongshore in the high grass and behind the trees till I am opposite to them. At a distance they appear simply black and white, as they swim deep, – black backs and white throats. Now I find that they have retreated a little into the pontederia, and are very busily diving, or dipping, not immersing their whole bodies, but their heads and shoulders while their bodies are perfectly perpendicular, just like tame ducks. All of them close together will be in this attitude at the same moment. I now see that the throat, and probably upper part, at least, of breast, is clear-white, and there is a clear line of white above eye and on neck within a line of black; and as they stand on their heads, the tips apparently of their tails (possibly wings??) are conspicuously white or whitish; the upper part, also, is seen to be brownish rather than black. I presume these to be young summer ducks, though so dark; say two thirds grown.

How easy for the young ducks to hide amid the pickerel-weed along our river, while a boat goes by! and this plant attains its height when these water-fowl are of a size to need its shelter. Thousands of them might be concealed by it along our river, not to speak of the luxuriant sedge and grass of the meadows, much of it so wet

as to be inaccessible. These ducks are diving scarcely two feet within the edge of the pickerel-weed yet one who had not first seen them exposed from a distance would never suspect their neighborhood. See very great flocks of young red-wing blackbirds [Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*].



October 24, Wednesday: [Abraham Lincoln](#) replied to an inquiry he had received from John C. Lee, president of the Young Men’s Republican Association of Jacksonville, [Illinois](#). Presumably Lee had inquired whether the Democrats were correct in alleging that the candidate had contributed money to [John Brown](#)’s cause:

Confidential  
J.C. Lee, Esq Springfield, Ills.  
Dear Sir Oct. 24, 1860  
Yours of the 14th. was received some days ago, and should have been answered sooner.  
I never gave fifty dollars, nor one dollar, nor one cent, for the object you mention, or any such object.  
I once subscribed twentyfive dollars, to be paid whenever Judge Logan would decide it was necessary to enable the people of Kansas to defend themselves against any force coming against them from without the Territory, and not by authority of the United States. Logan never made the decision, and I never paid a dollar on the subscription. The whole of this can be seen in the files of the Illinois Journal, since the first of June last.  
Yours truly  
A. LINCOLN



October 24. P.M.—To Walden Woods.  
See three little checkered adders lying in the sun by a stump on the sandy slope of the Deep Cut; yet sluggish. They are seven or eight inches long. The dark blotches or checkers are not so brown as in large ones. There is



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a transverse dark mark on the snout



and a forked light space on the back part [OF] the head.



Examine again Emerson's pond lot, to learn its age by the stumps cut last spring. I judge from them that they were some five (?) years cutting over the part next the water, for I count the rings of many stumps and they vary in number from twenty-four or five to thirty, though twenty-six, seven, and eight are commonest, as near as I can count. It is hard to distinguish the very first ring, and often one or more beside before you reach the circumference. But, these being almost all sprouts, I know that they were pretty large the first year. I repeatedly see beside the new tree (cut last spring) the now well-rotted stump from which it sprang. But I do not see the stump from which the last sprang. I should like to know how long they may continue to spring from the stump. Here are shoots of this year which have sprung vigorously from stumps cut in the spring, which had sprung in like manner some twenty-eight or thirty years ago from a stump which is still very plain by their sides. I see that some of these thirty-year trees are sprouts from a white oak stump twenty inches in diameter,—four from one in one case. Sometimes, when a white pine stump is all crumbling beside, there is a broad shingle-like flake left from the centre to the circumference, the old ridge of the stump, only a quarter of an inch thick, and this betrays the axe in a straight inclined surface.



The southeast part of Emerson's lot, next the pond, is yet more exclusively oak sprouts, or oak from oak, with fewer pine stumps. I examine an oak seedling in this. There are two very slender shoots rising ten or more inches above the ground, which, traced downward, conduct to a little stub, which I mistook for a very old root or part of a larger tree, but, digging it up, I found it to be a true seedling. This seedling had died down to the ground six years ago, and then these two slender shoots, such as you commonly see in oak woods, had started. The root was a regular seedling root (fusiform if *straightened*), at least seven eighths of an inch thick, while the largest shoot was only one eighth of an inch thick, though six years old and ten inches high. The root was probably ten years old when the seedling first died down, and is now some sixteen years old. Yet, as I say, the oak is only ten inches high. This shows how it endures and gradually pines and dies. As you look down on it, it has two turns, and three as you look from the side, so firmly is it rooted. Any one will be surprised on digging up some of these lusty oaken carrots.



Look at stumps in Heywood's lot, southeast side pond, from Emerson's to the swimming-place. They are white pine, oak, pitch pine, etc. I count rings of three white pine (from sixty to seventy). There are a few quite large white pine stumps; on one, ninety rings. One oak gives one hundred and sixteen rings. A pitch pine some fifteen or sixteen inches over gives about one hundred and thirty-five. All these are very easy, if not easier than ever, to count. The pores of the pines are distinct ridges, and the pitch is worn off.



(Many white and pitch pines elsewhere cut this year cannot be counted, they are so covered with pitch.) I remember this as a particularly dense and good-sized wood, mixed pine and oak. Mrs. Heywood's pitch pines by the shore, judging from some cut two or three years ago, are about eighty-five



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years old. As far as I have noticed, the pitch pine is the slowest-growing tree (of pines and oaks) and gives the most rings in the smallest diameter.  
Then there are the countless downy seeds (thistle-like) of the goldenrods,



so fine that we do not notice them in the air. They cover our clothes like dust. No wonder they spread over all fields and far into the woods.  
I see those narrow pointed yellow buds now laid bare so thickly along the slender twigs of the *Salix discolor*, which is almost bare of leaves.

November 3, Sunday: Professor [William Henry Harvey](#) wrote to [Harvard professor Asa Gray](#) about the completion of his reading of [Charles Darwin](#)'s ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES:

I have no objection *per se* to a doctrine of derivative descent....  
I have had a short friendly correspondence with Darwin on the subject, but without much result one way or the other.... His latter chapters are those which have most impressed me....  
Certainly there are many *broad facts* which can be read by a supposition of descent with variation. *How broad* those facts are, and how broad the limits of descent with variation may be, are questions which I do not think his theory affords answer to. It opens vistas vast, and so it evidently points whence, through time, light may come by which to see the objects in those vistas, but to my mind it does no more.... A good deal of Darwin reads to me like an ingenious dream.

ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES



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Friend [Lucretia Mott](#), the foremost spokesperson for nonviolence in the abolitionist movement in America, brought forward the position she had taken in regard to the “Christiana riot” near Philadelphia by declaring in regard to the raid by [John Brown](#) that<sup>118</sup>

**It is not John Brown the soldier we praise, it is John Brown the moral hero; John Brown the noble confessor and patient martyr we honor, and whom we think it proper to honor in this day when men are carried away by the corrupt and proslavery clamour against him. Our weapons were drawn only from the armory of Truth; they were those of faith and love.**



Nevertheless, in this supercharged atmosphere in which men were just then being asked to abandon the arms of faith and love in order to pick up the “New Minnie,” Lucretia’s use of the vocabulary of violence, her use of terms like “weapons” and “armory,” were bound to be problematic, bound to be misused by those, such as [Horace Greeley](#), who were determined to misunderstand and mock.

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118. We might say that HDT was the most belligerent nonresistor of evil the world had yet seen, but in fact that description had already been awarded to someone. It was awarded by [Robert Purvis](#) to [Lucretia Mott](#), and there is no shadow of a doubt that Friend Lucretia was a convinced disbeliever in violence. These words of hers are from the [National Anti-Slavery Standard](#) of November 3, 1860.



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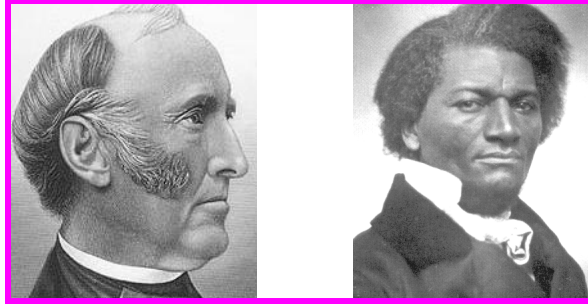
**[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 3d]**



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December 3, Monday: [Wendell Phillips](#) and [Frederick Douglass](#), among others, orated at the Tremont Temple in



Boston, in a meeting chaired by [James Redpath](#) and billed as a memorial for [John Brown](#), and there was an



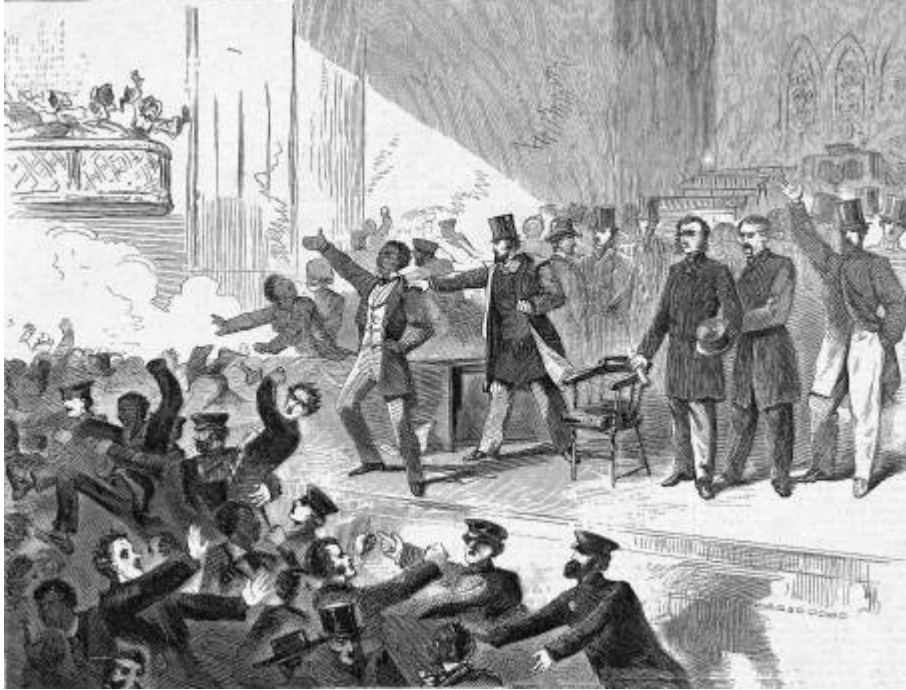
invasion by a group of rowdy gentlemen. They took over the platform. The Boston police, out of sympathy for these indignant gentlemen, closed the meeting and emptied the hall. The abolitionists simply moved down into the Negro Church on Joy Street. One account of the evening has it that [Lydia Maria Child](#) clapped so hard during a speech by Phillips on the topic of freedom of speech that she broke her wedding band. (A week later, Douglass would orate on freedom of speech at the Boston Music Hall.) As on other occasions, [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), who was exceedingly tall and thus could look over the heads of the people in a crowd, was armed and was acting as Phillips's bodyguard. In the issue of December 15th there would appear in [Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization](#) of New-York, an illustration of the breaking up of the meeting, engraved by Winslow Homer, entitled: "EXPULSION OF NEGROES AND ABOLITIONISTS FROM TREMONT TEMPLE, BOSTON,

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MASSACHUSETTS ON DECEMBER 3, 1860”:



Refer to Journal 14:291-2 for an account of a conversation [Henry Thoreau](#) had on this evening, defending [John Brown](#) against Joel W. Walcott’s and Sam Staples’s charge that he “did wrong” by dying. [Henry Thoreau](#) was chilled in Hill, Massachusetts while counting the rings of a hickory stump. –He found that the tree had been sixteen inches in diameter at twelve feet above the ground, and had “112 rings distinct, the first 50 within five and three quarters inches.”

On this day the new federal Congress convened, and President James Buchanan delivered his “State of the Union” annual message:

It is with great satisfaction I communicate the fact that since the date of my last annual message not a single slave has been imported into the United States in violation of the laws prohibiting the African slave trade. This statement is founded upon a thorough examination and investigation of the subject. Indeed, the spirit which prevailed some time since among a portion of our fellow-citizens in favor of this trade seems to have entirely subsided” (SENATE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 36th Congress, 2d session, I, No. 1, page 24).

[INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE](#)

[Thoreau](#) was being written to by Hobart & Robbins in Boston:

Boston 3d Dec’r, 1860.

Mr. Henry D. Thoreau Concord, N.H.  
Dr. Sir

Enclosed are Nine Dollars, to pay our order of the 26th.



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Return the enclosed bill receipted.

\$9.00

Yr's Resp'y  
Hobart & Robbins





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1861

March 18, Monday: At the invitation of the government of Santo Domingo, Spain re-annexed its former colony. Spanish troops from [Cuba](#) entered the country.

A state convention in Arkansas turned down [secession](#) 39-35 but allowed for a plebiscite.

[US CIVIL WAR](#)

Governor [Sam Houston](#) of [Texas](#), having declined to take the oath of allegiance to the Confederate States of America, was deposed and retired.

Concord's annual exhibition was held in the new town hall. An announcement was made that [Mr. Thoreau](#) could not be present due to illness, but was still at work, hopefully, on the natural history of Concord that was to be used in the public schools there. Since the celebration that year was honoring [Bronson Alcott](#) as the Concord superintendent of schools, [Louisa May Alcott](#) had written a poem which, in the 2d verse, mentioned



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[John Brown](#).

**THE ALCOTT FAMILY**

An attempt was made to have this reference suppressed but the attempt was defeated, largely through the intervention of [Waldo Emerson](#). We have a letter briefly and unenthusiastically mentioning the program, from the 23-year-old daughter of [Dr. Josiah Bartlett](#), Annie Bartlett, to her soldier brother [Edward Jarvis "Ned" Bartlett](#) to whom she was writing religiously every Sunday:

*Mr. Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Franklin B. Sanborn spoke in the Hall about education, but I did not trouble them.*

**FRANKLIN B. SANBORN**

In about this timeframe [Thoreau](#) was copying from [HERODOTUS](#). A NEW AND LITERAL VERSION *FROM THE TEXT OF BAEHR*. WITH A GEOGRAPHICAL AND GENERAL INDEX. BY HENRY CARY, M.A., WORCESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD (London: Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Covent Garden, 1845) into his Indian Notebook #12 and Commonplace Book #2.

**HERODOTUS' HISTORIES**



March 18. Tree sparrows have warbled faintly for a week.

When I pass by a twig of willow, though of the slenderest kind, rising above the sedge in some dry hollow early in December, or in midwinter above the snow, my spirits rise as if it were an oasis in the desert. The very name "sallow" (salix, from the Celtic sal-lis, near water) suggests that there is some natural sap or blood flowing there. It is a divining wand that has not failed, but stands with its root in the fountain.

The fertile willow catkins are those green caterpillar-like ones, commonly an inch or more in length, which develop themselves rapidly after the sterile yellow ones which we had so admired are fallen or effete. Arranged around the bare twigs, they often form green wands eight to eighteen inches long. A single catkin consists of from twenty-five to a hundred little pods, more or less ovate and beaked, each of which is closely packed with cotton, in which are numerous seeds so small that they are scarcely discernible by ordinary eyes.

I do not know what they mean who call this the emblem of despairing love! "The willow, worn by forlorn paramour!" It is rather the emblem of love and sympathy with all nature. It may droop, —it is so lithe, supple,



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and pliant,— but it never weeps. The willow of Babylon blooms not the less hopefully with us, though its other half is not in the New World at all, and never has been. It droops, not to represent David's tears, but rather to snatch the crown from Alexander's head. (Nor were poplars ever the weeping sisters of Phaëton, for nothing rejoices them more than the sight of the Sun's chariot, and little reck they who drives it.)

Ah, willow! willow! Would that I always possessed thy good spirits.

No wonder its wood was anciently in demand for bucklers, for, take the whole tree, it is not only soft and pliant but tough and resilient (as Pliny says?), not splitting at the first blow, but closing its wounds at once and refusing to transmit its hurts.

I know of one foreign species which introduced itself into Concord as [a] withe used to tie up a bundle of trees. A gardener stuck it in the ground, and it lived, and has its descendants.

[Herodotus](#) says that the Scythians divined by the help of willow rods. I do not know any better twigs for this purpose.

How various are the habits of men! Mother says that her father-in-law, Captain Minott, not only used to roast and eat a long row of little wild apples, reaching in a semicircle from jamb to jamb under the andirons on the reddened hearth (I used to buy many a pound of Spanish brown at the stores for mother to redden the jambs and hearth with), but he had a quart of new milk regularly placed at the head of his bed, which he drank at many draughts in the course of the night. It was so the night he died, and my grandmother discovered that he was dying, by his not turning over to reach his milk. I asked what he died of, and mother answered apoplexy! at which I did not wonder. Still this habit may not have caused it.

I have a cousin, also, who regularly eats his bowl of bread and milk just before going to bed, however late. He is a very stirring man.

You can't read any genuine history —as that of [Herodotus](#) or the Venerable Bede— without perceiving that our interest depends not on the subject but on the man, — on the manner in which he treats the subject and the importance he gives it. A feeble writer and without genius must have what he thinks a great theme, which we are already interested in through the accounts of others, but a genius —a Shakespeare, for instance— would make the history of his parish more interesting than another's history of the world.

Wherever men have lived there is a story to be told, and it depends chiefly on the story-teller or historian whether that is interesting or not. You are simply a witness on the stand to tell what you know about your neighbors and neighborhood. Your account of foreign parts which you have never seen should by good rights be less interesting.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

April: The popular weekly literary magazine of London, Once A Week. An Illustrated Miscellany of Literature, Art, Science, and Popular Information:



APR 1861 ONCE A WEEK

With the civil war well underway, President [Abraham Lincoln](#) appointed [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) as United States District Attorney for Massachusetts (until September 1866). All hands on deck! Conspirator, go thou and sin no more!



[Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by [Mrs. Mary Peabody Mann](#), with an invitation to dinner to meet a Mrs. Josiah Quincy who evidently was the wife of the former Boston mayor Josiah Quincy, Jr. and a daughter-in-



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law of the former president of Harvard College Josiah Quincy, Sr.



[Daniel Foster](#) returned from Boston to Centralia, [Kansas](#) and would remain there until May 1862.

In order to generate an autograph paper [Wendell Phillips](#) jotted down a famous quote: ““Count that day lost / Whose low descending sun / Sees at thy hand / No worthy action done. — [John Brown](#)’ — Wendell Phillips, April 1861.”

RACE WAR,

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May 12, Sunday: In Worcester, the travelers [Henry Thoreau](#) and Horace Mann, Jr. visited the east side of Quinsigamond Pond with H.G.O. Blake and Theophilus Brown (and another resident of Worcester) and again slept over at Blake's home. Thoreau being too weak, they took a carriage out from the center of town to Lake Quinsigamond. (The only time before, that they had taken a carriage, was once when they had been accompanied by Sophia Thoreau.) Meanwhile, at a flag-raising ceremony at Ft. Warren, William J. Martland's Brockton Band was playing the tune of the song "Say, brothers, will you meet us on Canaan's happy shore?" while the battalion chorus of the 2d Battalion of Boston Light Infantry, Massachusetts Volunteer Militia was singing the lyrics of the song "John Brown's Body" for the first time at a public event. The lyrics for the song "John Brown's Body" presumably were in reference to Sergeant John Brown of that battalion, rather than to the nationally famous "Captain" [John Brown](#). A smallish Scotsman and a second tenor in the 2d Battalion chorus, Sgt. Brown had evidently been something of a figure of fun among the men. Their commanding officer, Major Ralph W. Newton, was concerned that his command might, by the use of a mis-interpretable name such as "John Brown," implicitly become associated with the politically incorrect cause of abolitionism (identified at the time with an attitude of insolence, sedition, anarchism, free love, disobedience to orders, etc.) and attempted to force a change to the lyrics so that they referred instead to Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth. Rank has its privileges, and colonels and other superior officers are of course inherently of greater interest than inferior and noncommissioned officers such as mere sergeants — but unaccountably this attempt did not succeed.



John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave,  
While weep the sons of bondage, whom he ventured all  
to save ;  
But, tho' he lost his life in struggling for the slave,  
His Soul is marching on.  
Chorus : Glory, Glory Hallelujah !  
Glory, Glory Hallelujah !  
Glory, Glory Hallelujah !  
His Soul is marching on.

John Brown was a Hero undaunted, true and brave ;  
And Kansas knew his valor, when he fought her rights  
to save ;  
And now, though the grass grows green above his grave,  
His Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.

He captured Harper's Ferry with his nineteen men so true,  
And he frightened Old Virginy, till she trembled  
through and through.  
They hung him for a traitor : themselves a Traitor crew ;  
But his Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.

John Brown was John the Baptist of Christ we are to see,  
Christ who of the bondman shall the Liberator be ;  
And soon, throughout the Sunny South, the slaves  
shall all be free :  
For, his Soul is marching on ! Glory, &c.

The conflict that he heralded, he looks from Heaven to view  
On the army of the Union, with his Flagged, white and blue,  
And Heaven shall ring with anthems o'er the deed :  
they mean to do :  
For, his Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.

Ye, Soldiers of Freedom, then strike, while strike ye may,  
The death-blow of Oppression, in a better time and way ;  
For, the dawn of Old John Brown has brightened into day,  
And his Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR



May 12, Sunday: In Worcester.

Rode to east side of Quinsigamond Pond with Blake and Brown and a dry humorist, a gentleman who has been a sportsman and was well acquainted with dogs. He said that he once went by water to St. John, N.B., on a sporting excursion, taking his dog with him; but the latter had such a remarkable sense of decency that, seeing no suitable place aboard the vessel, he did not yield to the pressing demands of nature and, as the voyage lasted several days, swelled up very much. At length his master, by taking him aside and setting him the example, persuaded him to make water only. When at length he reached St. John, and was leading his dog by a rope up a long hill there which led to the town, he was compelled to stop repeatedly for his dog to empty himself and was the observed of all observers. This suggested that a dog could be educated to be far more cleanly in some respects than men are.

He also states that a fox does not regard all dogs,—or, rather, avoid them,—but only hunting dogs. He one day heard the voices of hounds in pursuit of a fox and soon after saw the fox come trotting along a path in which he himself was walking. Secreting himself behind a wall he watched the motions of the fox, wishing to get a shot at him, but at that moment his dog, a spaniel, leapt out into the path and advanced to meet the fox, which stood still without fear to receive him. They smelled of one another like dogs, and the sportsman was prevented from shooting the fox for fear of hitting his dog. So he suddenly showed himself in the path, hoping thus to separate them and get a shot. The fox immediately cantered backward in the path, but his dog ran after him so directly in a line with the fox that he was afraid to fire for fear of killing the dog.

DOG



## RACE WAR,

## NOT CIVIL WAR

July: On a hot day during this month, marching down Broadway in [Washington DC](#), a Massachusetts regiment sang to a song to the tune of a Southern camp-meeting hymn, — [John Brown](#)'s body lies a-moldering in the grave/ His soul is marching on! The song, written by an unknown soldier, would become a favorite among Union soldiers. [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#)'s wife, [Julia Ward Howe](#), was watching the Massachusetts men march past, and she would later write new words for the tune, calling it "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

The 1st Battle of Bull Run. Public demand pushed General-in-Chief Winfield Scott to advance on the South before adequately training his untried troops.



Scott ordered General Irvin McDowell to advance on Confederate troops stationed at Manassas Junction, Virginia. McDowell attacked on July 21, and was initially successful, but the introduction of Confederate reinforcements resulted in a Southern victory and a chaotic retreat toward Washington by federal troops. Benjamin Wade, Lyman Trumbull, James Grimes, Zachariah Chandler, and other Washington politicians, had taken a day trip out into the countryside to witness the fighting. There had not seemed to them to be any



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particular risk involved. At one point, however, this group of politicians was nearly captured.



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Suddenly aware of the threat of a protracted war and the army's need for organization and training, [Abraham Lincoln](#) replaced General McDowell with General George B. McClellan.

To blockade the coast of the Confederacy effectively, the federal navy had to be improved. By July, the effort at improvement had made a difference and an effective blockade had begun. The South responded by building small, fast ships that could outmaneuver Union vessels. On November 7, 1861, Captain Samuel F. Dupont's warships silenced Confederate guns in Fort Walker and Fort Beauregard. This victory enabled General Thomas W. Sherman's troops to occupy first Port Royal and then all the famous Sea Islands of South Carolina.

While the Confederate Lieutenant Colonel John R. Baylor was attempting to take possession of the Arizona Territory for the South, the Chiricahuas and Mimbrenos were attempting to take possession of the area for their coalition of Apache Navajos.

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August 9, Friday: The new song “John Brown’s Body” was spreading rapidly through the Union Army. Few would realize that the “John Brown” being sung had been merely a short second tenor Scotts sergeant who had drowned while crossing a river, rather than the famous [hanged](#) traitor desperado “Captain” [John Brown](#). (The verses we now have are later redactions in that they explicitly mention Harpers Ferry and Kansas and hanging, and date to a subsequent era in which the identification of John Brown of the song with the John Brown of Harpers Ferry had become complete; the song about the body of Sgt. Brown a’ moultering in its grave as it was initially being sung of course included no such topical references.)



John Brown's body lies a moultering in the grave,  
While weep the sons of bondage, whom he ventured all  
to save ;  
But, tho' he lost his life in struggling for the slave,  
His Soul is marching on.  
Chorus : - Glory, Glory Hallelujah !  
Glory, Glory Hallelujah !  
Glory, Glory Hallelujah !  
His Soul is marching on.

John Brown was a Hero undaunted, true and brave ;  
And Kansas knew his valor, when he fought her rights  
to save ;  
And now, though the grass grows green above his grave,  
His Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.

He captured Harper's Ferry with his nineteen men so true,  
And he frightened Old Virginy, till she trembled  
through and through.  
They hung him for a traitor : themselves a Traitor crew ;  
But his Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.

John Brown was John the Baptist of Christ we are to see,  
Christ who of the bondman shall the Liberator be ;  
And soon, throughout the Sunny South, the slaves  
shall all be free :  
For, his Soul is marching on ! Glory, &c.

The conflict that he heralded, he looks from Heaven to view  
On the army of the Union, with his Flagged, white and blue,  
And Heaven shall ring with anthems o'er the deed :  
they mean to do :  
For, his Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.

Ye, Soldiers of Freedom, then strike, while strike ye may,  
The death-blow of Oppression, in a better time and way ;  
For, the dawn of Old John Brown has brightened into day,  
And his Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.



## RACE WAR,

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October 11, Friday midnight: The steamer *Gordon* departed in the rain and dark from [Charleston](#) harbor in order to slip Confederate emissaries [James Murray Mason](#) and [John Slidell](#) past the Union blockade and carry them to [Havana](#), where they could board the regular, fast British mail packet ship heading across the Atlantic.



Arriving in Heidelberg, [Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” jotted in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: “After eleven days journey, here I am under the roof of my friends, in their hospitable house on the banks of the Neckar, with its garden climbing up the side of the Heiligenberg.... Blazing sun; my room is flooded with light and warmth. Sitting opposite the Geisberg, I write to the murmur of the Neckar, which rolls its green waves, flecked with silver, exactly beneath the balcony on which my room opens. A great barge coming from Heilbron passes silently under my eyes, while the wheels of a cart which I cannot see are dimly heard on the road which skirts the river. Distant voices of children, of cocks, of chirping sparrows, the clock of the Church of the Holy Spirit, which chimes the hour, serve to gauge, without troubling, the general tranquility of the scene. One feels the hours gently slipping by, and time, instead of flying, seems to hover. A peace beyond words steals into my heart, an impression of morning grace, of fresh country poetry which brings back the sense of youth, and has the true German savor.... Two decked barges carrying red flags, each with a train of flat boats filled with coal, are going up the river and making their way under the arch of the great stone bridge. I stand at the window and see a whole perspective of boats sailing in both directions; the Neckar is as animated as the street of some great capital; and already on the slope of the wooded mountain, streaked by the smoke-wreaths of the town, the castle throws its shadow like a vast drapery, and traces the outlines of its battlements and turrets. Higher up, in front of me, rises the dark profile of the Molkenkur; higher still, in relief against the dazzling east, I can distinguish the misty forms of the two towers of the Kaiserstuhl



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and the Trutzheinrich.

But enough of landscape. My host, Dr. George Weber, tells me that his manual of history is translated into Polish, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, and French, and that of his great “Universal History” — three volumes are already published. What astonishing power of work, what prodigious tenacity, what solidity! O deutscher Fleiss!”

During this day [Henry Thoreau](#) had been in the process of writing from Concord to the Reverend James M. Stone,<sup>119</sup> secretary of the Boston [Emancipation](#) League, about a request he had just received from the wealthy lead pipe manufacturer and clandestine supporter of [John Brown](#)’s mission, [George Luther Stearns](#), to write upon the subject of [emancipation](#). His health, he reported, was no longer up to such a task:

*Concord Oct 11<sup>th</sup> 1861*

*Mr James M. Stone,*

*Dear Sir,*

*I have just received a letter from Mr. Stearns, on the subject of emancipation, and would say, briefly, that I heartily sympathise with you in your enterprise, and hope that you may succeed; but, I am sorry to add, such is the state of my health, and has been for ten months past, preventing all literary employment, that I cannot promise you the least aid.*

*Yours respectfully*

*Henry D. Thoreau*

{written upside down at the bottom of the page:

H.D. Thoreau

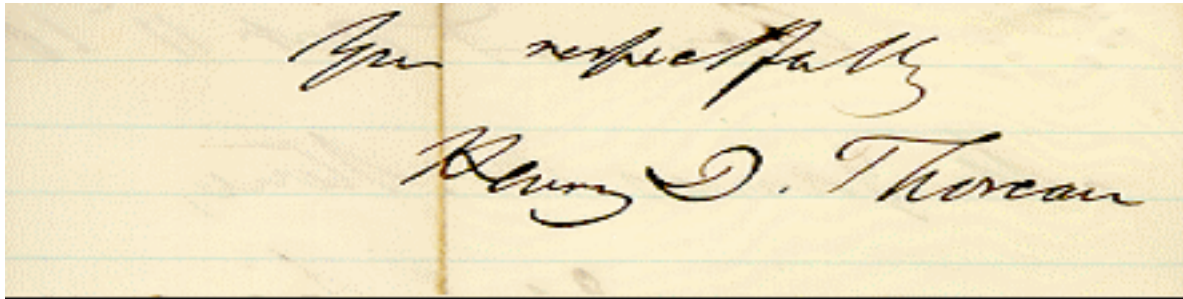
Oct. 11. 1861.}

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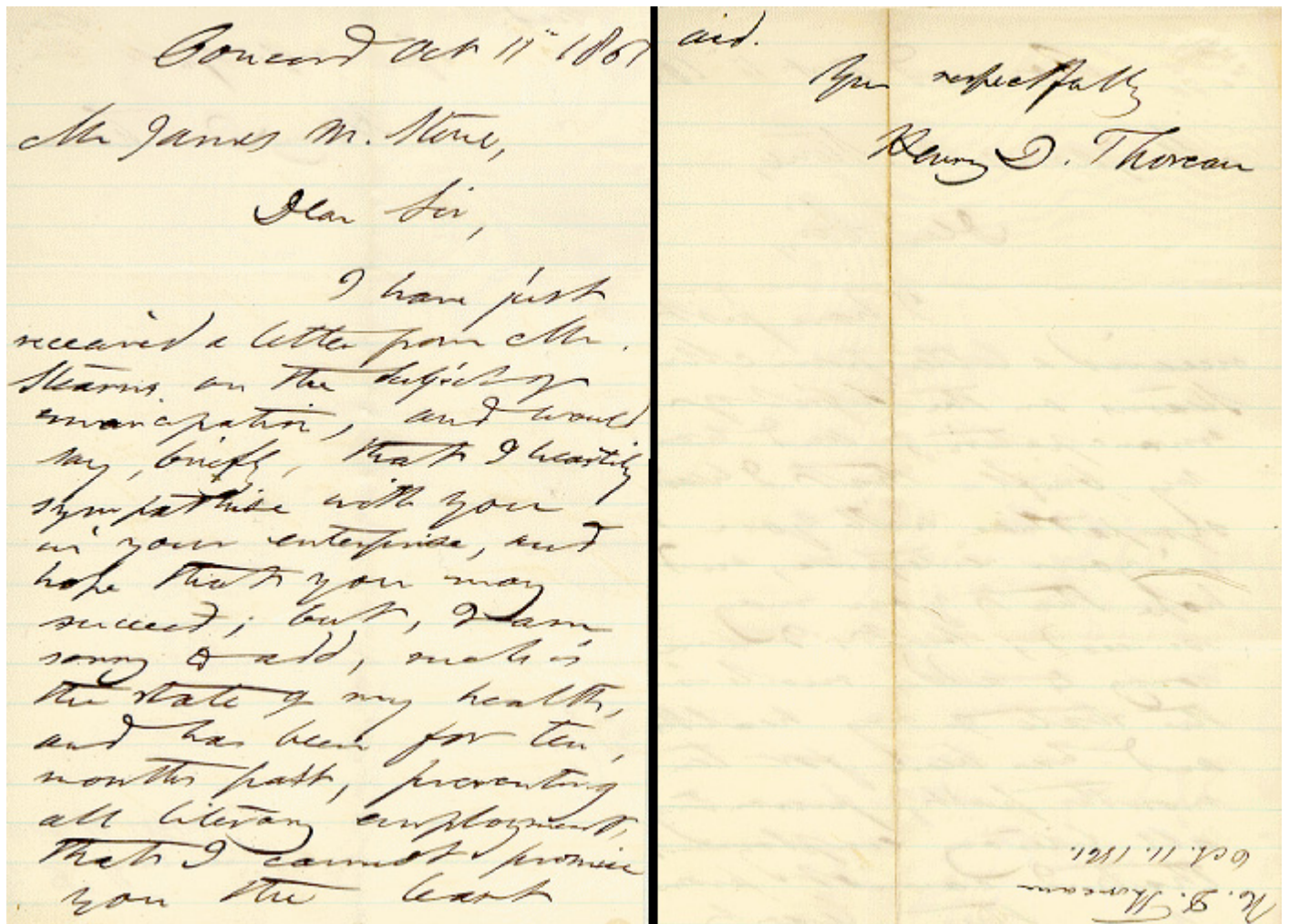
119. Any relation to [Lucy Stone](#)?

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Autograph Letter Signed; 2 pages; 20.2 centimeters; published in *American Literature* 51 (March 1979):98-100 — see following screens for an image of the letter, which has been donated to Kent State University's Special Collections & Archives by Charles Wesley Slack's great-grandson Paul C. Kitchin:



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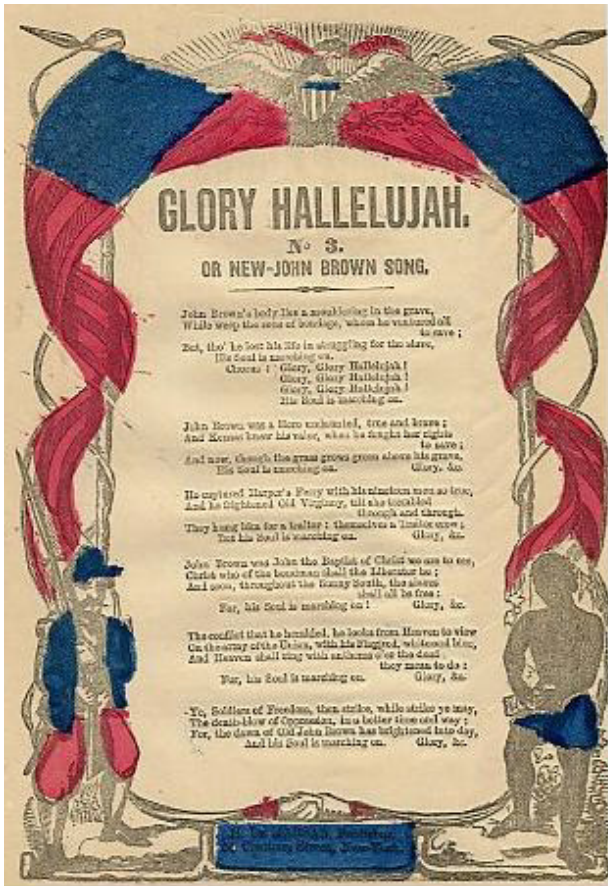
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# RACE WAR,

# NOT CIVIL WAR



November: The Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) was granted authority to recruit and command a regiment of Massachusetts white men.



John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave,  
While weep the sons of bondage, whom he ventured all  
to save ;  
But, tho' he lost his life in struggling for the slave,  
His Soul is marching on.  
Chorus : Glory, Glory Hallelujah !  
Glory, Glory Hallelujah !  
Glory, Glory Hallelujah !  
His Soul is marching on.

John Brown was a Hero undaunted, true and brave ;  
And Kansas knew his valor, when he fought her rights  
to save ;  
And now, though the grass grows green above his grave,  
His Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.

He captured Harper's Ferry with his nineteen men so true,  
And he frightened Old Virginiy, till she trembled  
through and through.  
They hung him for a traitor : themselves a Traitor crew ;  
But his Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.

John Brown was John the Baptist of Christ we are to see,  
Christ who of the bondman shall the Liberator be ;  
And soon, throughout the Sunny South, the slaves  
shall all be free :  
For, his Soul is marching on ! Glory, &c.

The conflict that he heralded, he looks from Heaven to view  
On the army of the Union, with his Flag, red, white and blue,  
And Heaven shall ring with anthems o'er the deed :  
they mean to do :  
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Ye, Soldiers of Freedom, then strike, while strike ye may,  
The death-blow of Oppression, in a better time and way ;  
For, the dawn of Old John Brown has brightened into day,  
And his Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.

[Julia Ward Howe](#) had gone to [Washington DC](#) with a group including the Reverend [James Freeman Clarke](#) to

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bring supplies to Massachusetts volunteers, and was staying in [Willard's Hotel](#).



One morning she drowsed awake with a poem in her head, “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” that could be set to the tune of the currently popular “John Brown’s Body,” and scribbled it with an “old stump of a pen” onto the back of a piece of Sanitary Commission stationery “without looking at the paper.”

US CIVIL WAR



As I lay waiting for dawn, the long lines of the desired poem began to twine themselves in my mind.



Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;  
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.  
He has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword,  
His truth is marching on!

Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!

Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on.

I have seen him in the watchfires of a hundred circling camps;<sup>120</sup>  
They have builded him an altar in the evening dews and damps.  
I can read his righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps;  
His day is marching on!

---

120. The “hundred circling camps” were just that — the ring of forts around Washington DC.





## RACE WAR,

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Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on.  
I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel;  
“As ye deal with my condemners, so with you my grace shall deal.”  
Let the hero born of woman crush the serpent with his heel,  
Since god is marching on!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on.  
He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;  
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgement seat.  
O be swift, my soul, to answer him, be jubilant my feet!  
Our god is marching on!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on.  
In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,  
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me.  
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free  
While god is marching on!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on.  
He is coming like the glory of the morning on the wave;  
He is wisdom to the mighty, he is courage to the brave.  
So the world shall be his foot stool and the soul of wrong his slave,  
As god is marching on!<sup>121</sup>  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on.

---

121. This rarely-published sixth verse is presented as it appears in BEST LOVED POEMS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

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Samuel Langhorn Clemens, steamboat pilot, had been stranded in New Orleans because the [Civil War](#) had interdicted traffic on the Mississippi River, and had enlisted in the Confederacy. However, his brother Orion Clemens had been active in the presidential campaign of [Abraham Lincoln](#) and in reward had been appointed secretary to the Nevada Territory. –So he accompanied his brother on a 21-day stagecoach journey to the west, arriving finally in Nevada.

There is one thing which I can't stand and won't stand, from many people. That is sham sentimentality... the rot that deals in the "happy days of yore," the "sweet yet melancholy past," with its "blighted hopes" and its "vanished dreams."



[Frederick Douglass](#) renewed his linkages with the Garrisonians.



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**NOT CIVIL WAR**

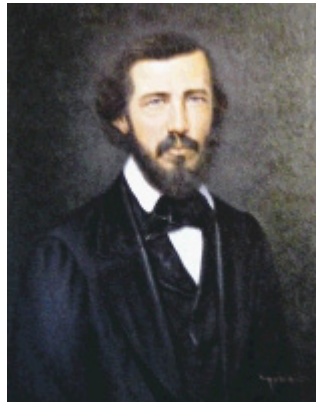
December 19, Thursday: Union forces sank a “Stone Fleet” in the channel to begin their blockade of [Charleston](#) harbor.

In a two-page document created in Talbot County, Georgia on this date, there appears the written appraisal of the eleven slaves of the estate of one William Daniel. Each slave is listed by name and value. An example: “Ranval a negro man Appraised at \$800.”

General McClellan bought 50 of the “Union Repeating Gun” or “coffee-mill” machine guns at \$735 each. A couple of these would be given to Colonel John Geary to test, and he would be unimpressed, reporting they were “inefficient and unsafe to the operators.” General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson would capture 17 such “revolving guns” at the [Harpers Ferry](#) arsenal, but there is no report that he then attempted to use them in combat.

**US CIVIL WAR**

Earlier this month (not in late January as sometimes reported), the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) had spoken at Concord Town Hall of “The Death and Resurrection of Captain [John Brown](#).”



Needing to know when he was scheduled to speak in Boston, James Henry Lane (1814-1866) sent a telegram from [Washington DC](#) to [George Luther Stearns](#) in Boston.

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# RACE WAR,

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## 1862

February: [The Atlantic Monthly](#) published a new poem by [Julia Ward Howe](#), “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” which would be set to the tune used by “John Brown’s Body” and would become a parable of Puritan New England’s morally self-righteous idealism.<sup>122</sup> The magazine paid \$4.<sup>00</sup> or \$5.<sup>00</sup> for the rights — this lets you know approximately, oh, to the nearest Andrew Jackson twenty or so, what a song about how Jesus wants you to kill people might be worth.<sup>123</sup>



122. Edmund Wilson, in his *PATRIOTIC GORE* (1962), has pointed out that in this jingle, Christ’s having died to make men holy wasn’t a good enough job, so it was up to us to go him one better, and die to make men free:

Now come on, New England boys, get in step with the marching God! If you succeed in crushing the serpent [the Confederacy], God will reward you with “grace.”

What a commentary this “get in step with the marching God” of Wilson’s is upon the normative misremembering of Thoreau’s “drummer” metaphor in *WALDEN*, as “march to the beat of a different drummer”!

123. Recently [The Atlantic Monthly](#) was able to sell the original holograph manuscript that had been submitted to them by [Julia Ward Howe](#), to some rich dude, of course for megabucks.



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June 29, Tuesday: As [Southern forces](#) attacked across the Chickahominy River, [Federal troops](#) withdrew to safety leaving behind 2,500 sick and wounded.

There was fighting at Savage's Station.

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[Waldo Emerson](#) repeated his funeral oration on [Henry David Thoreau](#) for the benefit of the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)'s "Fraternity" in Boston.

After Thoreau's death [Louisa May Alcott](#) wrote a poem "Thoreau's Flute" for [The Atlantic Monthly](#). According to [Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson](#) she wrote the poem while she was nursing in the military hospital in [Washington DC](#) where she had received the news of Henry Thoreau's death:

We sighing said, "Our Pan is dead—  
His pipe hangs mute beside the river,  
Around it friendly moonbeams quiver,  
But music's airy voice is fled.  
Spring comes to us in guise forlorn,  
The blue-bird chants a requiem,  
The willow-blossom waits for him,  
The genius of the wood is gone"

Then from the flute, untouched by hands,  
There came a low, harmonious breath:  
For such as he there is no death.  
His life the eternal life commands.  
Above men's aims his nature rose.  
The wisdom of a just content  
Make one small spot a continent,  
And turned to poetry life's prose

Haunting the hills, the stream, the wild,  
Swallow and aster, lake and pine  
To him seemed human or divine,  
Fit mates for this large-hearted child.  
Such homage nature ne'er forgets;  
And yearly on the coverlid  
'Neath which her darling lieth hid  
Will write his name in violets.

To him no vain regrets belong  
Whose soul, that finer instrument,  
Gave to the world no poor lament,  
But wood-notes ever sweet and strong.  
Oh lonely friend, He still will be  
A potent presence, though unseen,  
Steadfast, sagacious and serene.  
Seek not for him: he is with Thee.

At that time the magazine was withholding the names of contributors, and [Louisa](#) was informed by her father [Bronson Alcott](#) that one day while he was visiting [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#), the poet had picked up the [The Atlantic Monthly](#) and had read aloud a few lines from her poem, and had asked her father whether he had read "Emerson's fine poem on Thoreau's Flute?"

[THE ALCOTT FAMILY](#)

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Whittier-Holmes-Emerson-Motley-Alcott-Hawthorne-Lowell-Agassiz-Longfellow



RACE WAR,

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In "[Chiefly about War Matters](#)," edited and expurgated by [Ticknor & Fields](#), [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) revealed that he had been utterly at odds with [Emerson](#)'s and [Thoreau](#)'s attitude while [John Brown](#) was awaiting execution in 1859.



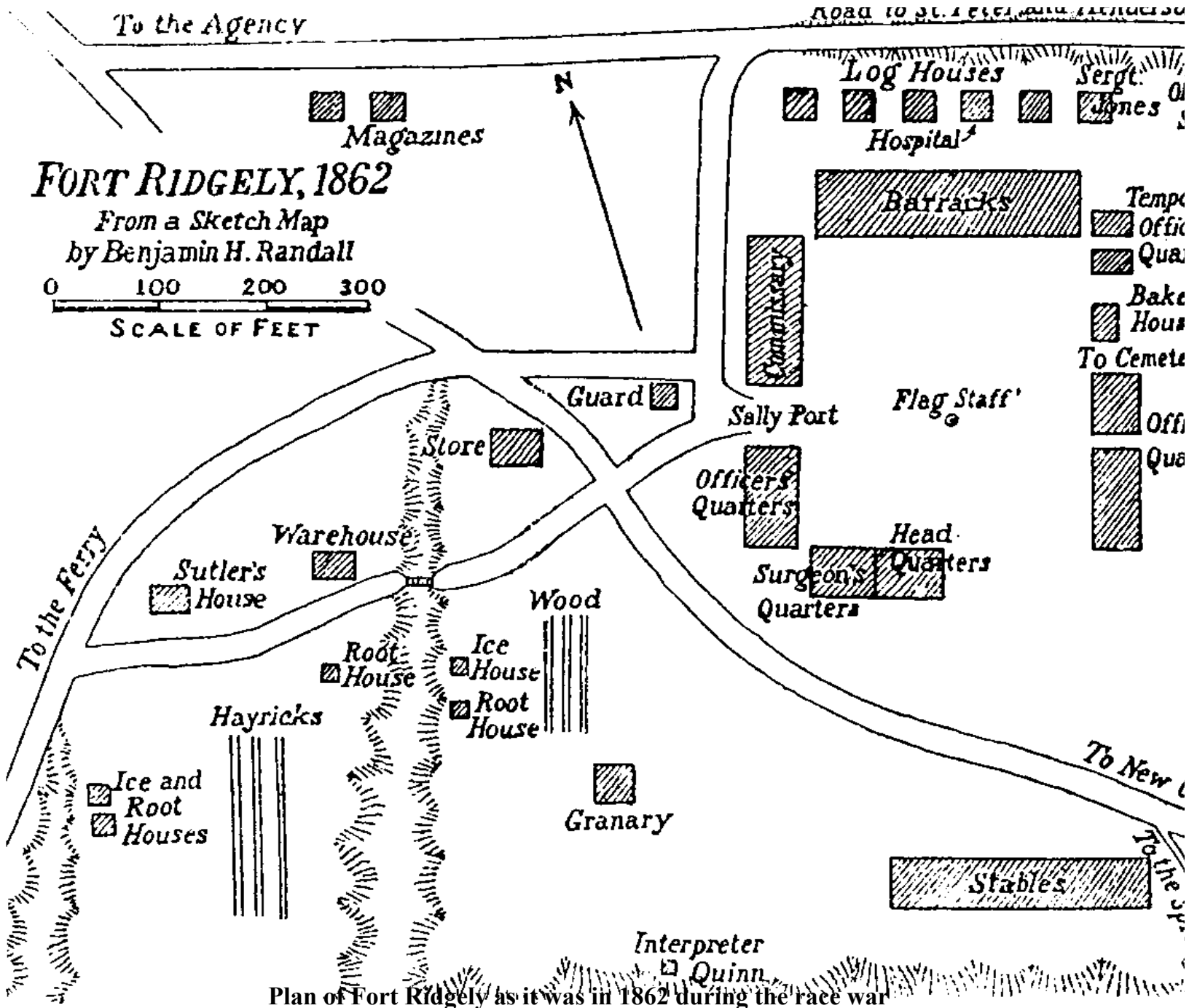
I shall not pretend to be an admirer of old John Brown, any farther than sympathy with Whittier's excellent ballad about him may go; nor did I expect ever to shrink so unutterably from any apophthegm of a sage, whose happy lips have uttered a hundred gold sentences, as from that saying (perhaps falsely attributed to so honored a source), that the death of this blood-stained fanatic has "made the Gallows as venerable as the Cross!" Nobody was ever more justly hanged.

HANGING



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR



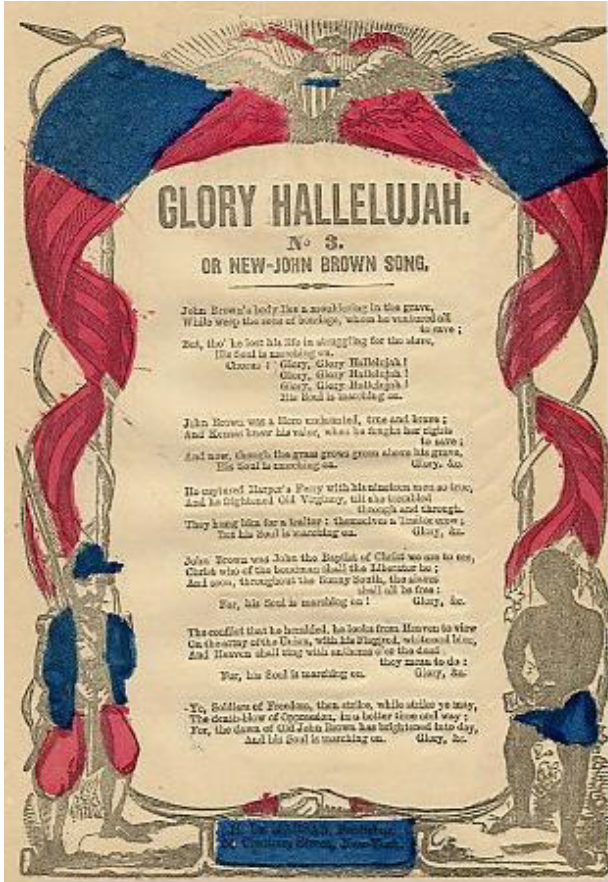
Plan of Fort Ridgely as it was in 1862 during the race war



RACE WAR,

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July: The short Scots sergeant and 2d tenor, [Sgt. John Brown](#), a putative subject of the song “John Brown’s Body,” was drowned while attempting to ford the Rappahannock River with his unit of the 2d Battalion of Boston Light Infantry, Massachusetts Volunteer Militia.



John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave,  
While weep the sons of bondage, whom he ventured all  
to save ;  
But, tho' he lost his life in struggling for the slave,  
His Soul is marching on.  
Chorus : : Glory, Glory Hallelujah !  
Glory, Glory Hallelujah !  
Glory, Glory Hallelujah !  
His Soul is marching on.

John Brown was a Hero undaunted, true and brave ;  
And Kansas knew his valor, when he fought her rights  
to save ;  
And now, though the grass grows green above his grave,  
His Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.

He captured Harper's Ferry with his nineteen men so true,  
And he frightened Old Virginy, till she trembled  
through and through.  
They hung him for a traitor : themselves a Traitor crew ;  
But his Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.

John Brown was John the Baptist of Christ we are to see,  
Christ who of the bondman shall the Liberator be ;  
And soon, throughout the Sunny South, the slaves  
shall all be free :  
For, his Soul is marching on ! Glory, &c.

The conflict that he heralded, he looks from Heaven to view  
On the army of the Union, with his Flagged, white and blue,  
And Heaven shall ring with anthems o'er the deed :  
they mean to do :  
For, his Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.

Ye, Soldiers of Freedom, then strike, while strike ye may,  
The death-blow of Oppression, in a better time and way ;  
For, the dawn of Old John Brown has brightened into day,  
And his Soul is marching on. Glory, &c.

(Note well that these gallows-humorous soldiers were already singing about the body of their sergeant lying a mouldering in the grave, while Sgt. Brown was still alive and kicking in their regiment.)

[Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) placed an essay on the civil war, “Chiefly about War Matters,” in [The Atlantic Monthly](#). Some remarks he thought to make were censored by [James Thomas Fields](#) of [Ticknor & Fields](#), the publisher of the magazine, with Hawthorne’s prior consent, as just too outrageous to publish during a war situation. Fields evidently had, however, no objection to Hawthorne’s revealing how utterly he had been at odds with



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[Emerson](#)'s and [Thoreau](#)'s attitude toward [John Brown](#) while his execution had been pending in late 1859.



I shall not pretend to be an admirer of old John Brown, any farther than sympathy with Whittier's excellent ballad about him may go; nor did I expect ever to shrink so unutterably from any apophthegm of a sage, whose happy lips have uttered a hundred gold sentences, as from that saying (perhaps falsely attributed to so honored a source), that the death of this blood-stained fanatic has "made the Gallows as venerable as the Cross!" Nobody was ever more justly hanged.

HANGING

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

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In the course of this article Hawthorne alleged something we have no reason whatever to believe to be true, and indeed, something we have no reason to believe was ever suggested by any evidence, to wit, that after bringing over the white people, the *Mayflower* had been used as a black slaver, a *negrero*.



**Hawthorne, whose politics had always been anti-negro and pro-slavery, was evidently the sort of guy who made up this sort of stuff up as he went along. At this critical juncture in the Civil War –the North toying with the idea of re-defining the war into a noble purpose in order to get it won– he was**



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**deliberately stirring the waters to make them muddier.**

There is an historical circumstance, known to few, that connects the children of the Puritans with these Africans of Virginia in a very singular way. They are our brethren, as being lineal descendants from the *Mayflower*, the fated womb of which, in her first voyage, sent forth a brood of Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock, and, in a subsequent one, spawned slaves upon the Southern soil, — a monstrous birth, but with which we have an instinctive sense of kindred, and so are stirred by an irresistible impulse to attempt their rescue, even at the cost of blood and ruin. The character of our sacred ship, I fear, may suffer a little by this revelation; but we must let her white progeny offset her dark one, — and two such portents never sprang from an identical source before.



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1863


January 1, Thursday: [Caroline Cushing Andrews](#) got married with [Rufus Leighton](#), a clerk for the Department of Treasury and professional stenographer.

The Reverend [William Rounseville Alger](#) delivered the annual election sermon before the Massachusetts Legislature.

The metric system became mandatory in Italy.

Two Schmiedelieder from Siegfried by [Richard Wagner](#) were performed for the initial time, in a concert setting in the Theater an der Wien, Vienna, directed by the composer.

Major General John B. Magruder, who had become the Confederate commander of military forces in Texas on November 29, 1862, gave the recapture of Galveston, Texas top priority. At 3AM four Confederate gunboats appeared, coming down the bay toward Galveston. Soon afterward, the Rebels commenced a land attack. The Union forces in Galveston were three companies of the 42d Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment under the command of Colonel Isaac S. Burrell. The Confederates captured or killed all of them except for the regiment's adjutant. They also took the *Harriet Lane*, by boarding her, and two barks and a schooner. Commander W.B. Renshaw's flagship, the USS *Westfield*, ran aground when trying to help the *Harriet Lane* and, at 10AM, she was blown up to prevent her capture. Galveston was in Confederate hands again although the Union blockade would limit commerce in and out of the harbor. Soon afterward, the Rebels would be commencing a land attack upon the port city.

Congress had enacted in 1861 that all slaves employed against the Union were to be considered free, and in 1862 that all slaves of men who supported the Confederacy were to be considered free. At this point President [Abraham Lincoln](#), who had been dragging his feet, more or less got on board this onrushing train. Having made a preliminary proclamation on September 22, 1862  that [emancipation](#) from [slavery](#) would become effective, at the turn of the year, in those states which had not renounced their rebelliousness, at this point he made good on his threat by issuing a proclamation of emancipation that had been drafted by a bunch of Washington lawyers.

READ THE FULL TEXT

A devout man, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon Portland Chase read the BIBLE daily and sought comfort in God for the loss of so many of his wives and so many of his children. When Chase had called to the President's attention that there was no mention of the Deity in the draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln had allowed as a new last line "And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of all mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

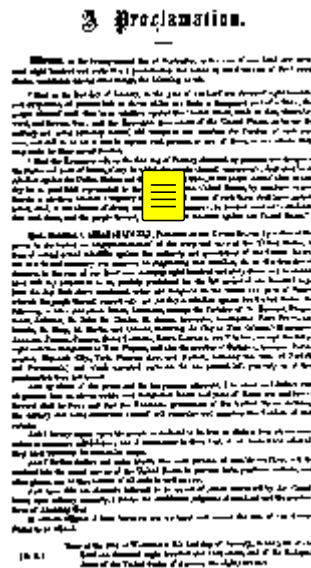
At the clock tick which began this year he, as a martial law measure, offered to "emancipate" all those slaves he did not have the power physically to touch, without offering anything at all to any slave whom he did have



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the power physically to touch. It was a neat trick, especially since we have no reason to suspect that he would have been willing to touch any black person whom he did have the power physically to touch. Although to all appearances he grandly was declaring to be free all slaves residing in territories in rebellion against the federal government, his “Emancipation Proclamation,” so called, would turn out to be actually only a temporary martial-law proclamation, which in accordance with the deliberate intention of its careful drafters would free precious few. (I don’t know that a head count has ever been conducted, and here suggest that such a count would prove to be alarming if not nauseating.) The proclamation explicitly stated that it did not apply at all to any of the slaves in border states fighting on the Union side; nor would it be of any applicability to slaves in southern areas already under Union control; nor would it be of any use to any other slaves, since, naturally, the states in rebellion would take no action on Lincoln’s order.<sup>124</sup> To avail themselves of this opportunity, slaves would have to vote with their feet. At great risk they would need to make their way across the battle lines into the Northern-controlled territories, where they would need to volunteer for war labor and get their names registered in the emancipation program. Pacifists and noneffectives need not apply.



[Abraham Lincoln](#) had been quite reluctant to see affairs come even to such a straited pass as this. A believer in white supremacy, he never viewed the war in any other manner than in terms of preserving the Union and his own control as President over the entirety of it. The simple fact was that, as pressure for abolition mounted in Congress and the country, as a practical politician similar to President [Richard Milhouse Nixon](#) (who would espouse and finance the Head Start program because of its political popularity although he believed the money was being wasted on children who, because they were black, would be incapable of profiting from the attention and the expenditure), Lincoln was willing to cave in and make himself more responsive. Thus it had come about that:

124. The hypocrisy of this was being well commented on in French newspapers at that time. For a review of this French commentary on the American white hypocrisy, refer to Blackburn, George M. FRENCH NEWSPAPER OPINION ON THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR. Contributions in American History No. 171. Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1997.



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## A PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS** on the 22nd day of September, A.D. 1862, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

That on the 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

That the executive will on the 1st day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State or the people thereof shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such States shall have participated shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State and the people thereof are not then in rebellion against the United States.

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-In-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing [*sic*??] said rebellion, do, on this 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the first day above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Palquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebone, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Morthampton [*sic*??], Elizabeth City, York, Princess Anne, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all case when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.





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The federal government's temporary instrument of war allowed that, while human slavery would continue to be tolerated everywhere within its sphere of influence, it would no longer tolerate this practice in any area **not** within said sphere of influence.

Nevertheless, before a black audience in Tremont Temple in Boston, this governmental declaration was read aloud and [Frederick Douglass](#) led in the singing of the hymn "Blow ye the trumpet, blow!" [William Cooper Nell](#), President of the sponsoring Union Progressive Association, addressed the group. For this occasion [Waldo Emerson](#) composed "Boston Hymn," a poem in which he neatly cut the Gordian Knot of compensation:

Pay ransom to the owner  
And fill the bag to the brim.  
Who is the owner? The slave is the owner,  
And ever was. Pay him.

We may imagine that on this occasion hands were shaken all around, with no distinction of color. Imagine then, if you will, the author of this Emancipation Proclamation, President [Abraham Lincoln](#), during one of his many electoral campaigns, reaching down from the stump and grasping the hand of a black man. Do you fancy that this ever happened?

The word "[emancipation](#)," after all, comes to us from the Latin *manus*, meaning "hand," and *capio*, meaning "take." When a Roman purchased something, it was considered that the act of purchasing was not complete, either conventionally or legally, until he had grasped it with his hand. If he was purchasing land, he picked up a handful of soil and thereby took title. If he was purchasing a slave, he took hold of the slave and thereby took title.

The power of this *paterfamilias* over his son was, in fact, the same as the power of this man over his slave –

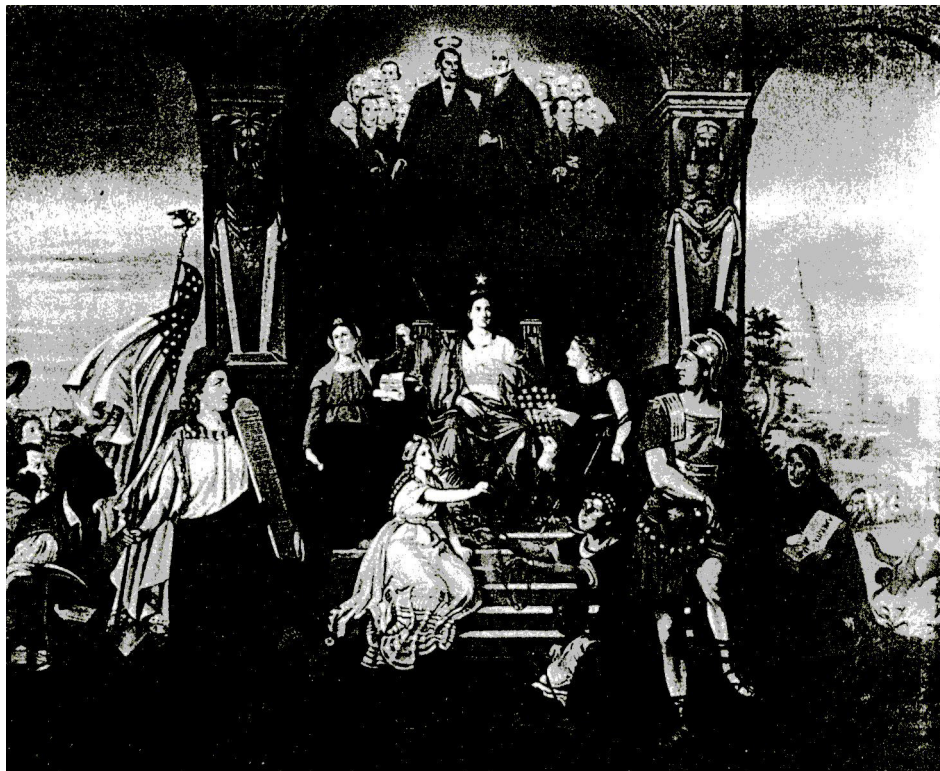
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he could execute either one— but there was a legal ceremony by which, when his son became of age, his son could be set free to form his own *familias*. In that ceremony the father took the son by the hand, as if he were taking possession of a slave, but then dropped his son's hand. After he had done this three times in succession, his son was *emancipio*. Emancipation, therefore, had a lot to do with shaking hands. Except during the [US Civil War](#).

I am leading up to saying that [Abraham Lincoln](#) “emancipated” all those slaves he did not have the power physically to touch, but did not emancipate any slave he did have the power physically to touch. It was a neat trick. Here, in this painting, we can see how it was done:



The Emancipation Proclamation was an offer to place names on a list, which persons, should they fulfil the preconditions, would, at the end of the period of hostilities, be granted papers of [manumission](#) by the Federal Government. This was a very formal matter. It required prior registration. Whose names were actually so registered? Who actually received such papers of manumission? There should be such a list somewhere, if anyone did initiate or complete this process and if anyone did actually get freedom through this vehicle. Where is that list? How long is it? Does it exist? No, my friend, you've been conned. After a long and bloody [civil war](#) which was fought over whether we were going to be one nation state or two rather than over racial issues, we got ourselves out of this holiday from the Commandments in part by a carefully worded temporary martial law measure denominated the Emancipation Proclamation, which had been created by a team of white [Washington DC](#) lawyers. Under the terms of that martial law measure, which lapsed as soon as martial law lapsed, if a Southern slave could make it across the battle lines intact, and then perform labor for the Northern armies, and if that Southern slave could arrange to have his or her name recorded as part of the indicated

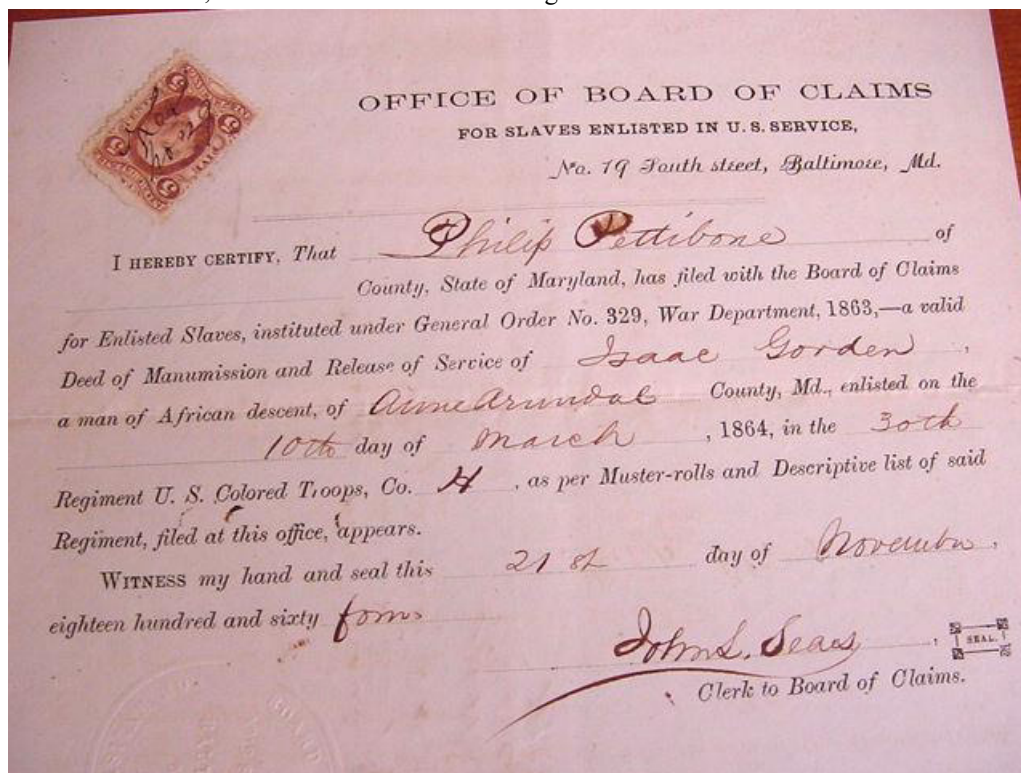


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program, as one of its beneficiaries, **then**, and **only** then, could he or she hope that at the successful conclusion of the war he or she would receive freebie manumission papers from the federal government. Read the fine print, and weep. I don't know how few people managed to avail themselves of this very restricted opportunity, but I do know it must have been very few, and I suspect in fact that it was zero. Perhaps one reason why we don't have a list of the names of people who obtained freedom in this way is embarrassment, at how short or null such a list would prove to be. We don't want to know about such things.

I have come across one such actual named military emancipation from this period. This emancipation did not, however, relate in any way to the Emancipation Proclamation. It related, instead, to a military Board of Claims for Enlisted Slaves which was instituted under General Order No. 329 of the War Department during 1863. Here is the original certification of manumission document, from this Office of the Board of Claims, and it seems to be based on military service that had been rendered by the slave Isaac Gorden as a member of H Company, 30th Regiment. of the U.S. Colored Troops. It includes an order to reimburse the owner of this soldier Isaac Gordon, a man named N. Hammond Esgless. The document reads as follows: "OFFICE OF



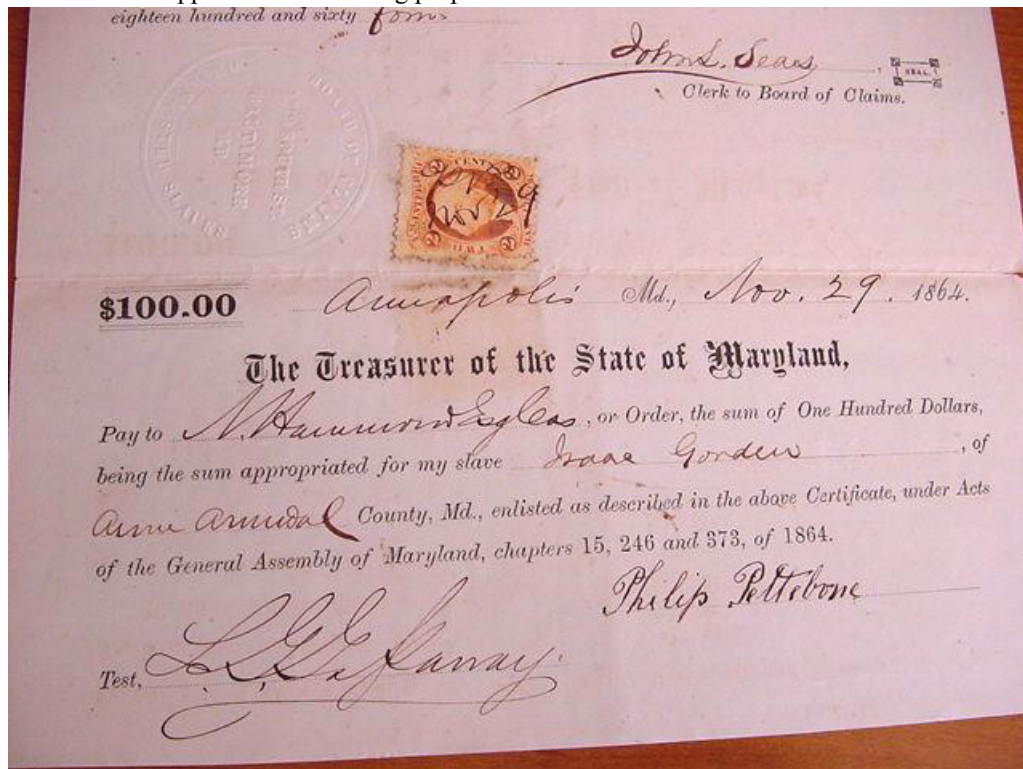
BOARD OF CLAIMS for slaves enlisted in U.S. Service, No. 19 South Street, Baltimore, [Maryland](#). I HEREBY CERTIFY, That Philip Pettibone of [blank] county, State of Maryland, has filed with the Board of Claims for Enlisted Slaves, instituted under General Order No. 329, War Department, 1863, - a valid Deed of Manumission and Release of service of Isaac Gorden a man of African decent, of Anne Arundel county, Md., enlisted on the 10th day of March, 1864, in the 30th Regiment U.S. Colored Troops, Co. H, as per Muster-rolls and descriptive list of said Regiment, filed at this office, appears. Witness my hand and seal this 21st. day of November, eighteen hundred and sixty four [signed] John S. Sears, Clerk to Board of Claims." There is an impress seal that says: Board of Claims for Enlisted Slaves No. 19 South St. Baltimore, Md. At the bottom of the document the following appears: "\$100.00 Annapolis Md. Nov. 29, 1864. The Treasurer of the State of




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Maryland, Pay to N. Hammond Esgless, or Order, the sum of One Hundred Dollars, being the sum appropriated for my slave Isaac Gorden, of Anne arundel County, Md. enlisted as described in the above Certificate, under Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland, chapter 15, 246 and 373, of 1864. [signed] Philip Pettibone Test, [signature illegible]" There are two Revenue stamps, a 5-cent and 2-cent, attached to the document and they are dated "Nov 29." The document has two folds. There is writing on the back of the document which appears to be for filing purposes.



After the Emancipation Proclamation, however, Headman Seattle (See-Ahth of the Susquamish) of the Susquamish, the same "Chief Seattle" who is famous for an environmentalist speech in the manner in which we all should be famous for our environmental speeches, that is, famous for an environmental speech which in fact wasn't made (his actual speech seems to have been about the deep spiritual differences between peoples of widely differing cultures), **would** free his 8 Native American slaves. 

At his mansion in Medford, Massachusetts, [George Luther Stearns](#) of the [Secret "Six"](#) conspiracy staged an unveiling ceremony for a heroic bust of Captain [John Brown](#) which he had commissioned from the sculptor [Edward Augustus Brackett](#) for a payment of \$120 in gold coins to place in the corner of his elaborately decorated Victorian foyer (the sculptor of course had needed to travel to Virginia first to measure the face of the condemned prisoner; this piece of marble would be missing for many years but we would preserve a cabinet photograph of it made by Warren of Cambridgeport). [Waldo Emerson](#) recited his "The Boston Hymn" poem and [Julia Ward Howe](#) recited her "Battle Hymn of the Republic" poem. The Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#), who had become a Colonel in command of a black regiment, was of course understandably unable to be present. The New York millionaire [Gerrit Smith](#) had not responded to the formal invitation, made no appearance, and offered no explanation. In addition to Stearns and Brackett as providers, and [Emerson](#) and [Mrs. Howe](#) as performers, the ceremony was attended by [John Murray Forbes](#), [Dr. Samuel](#)

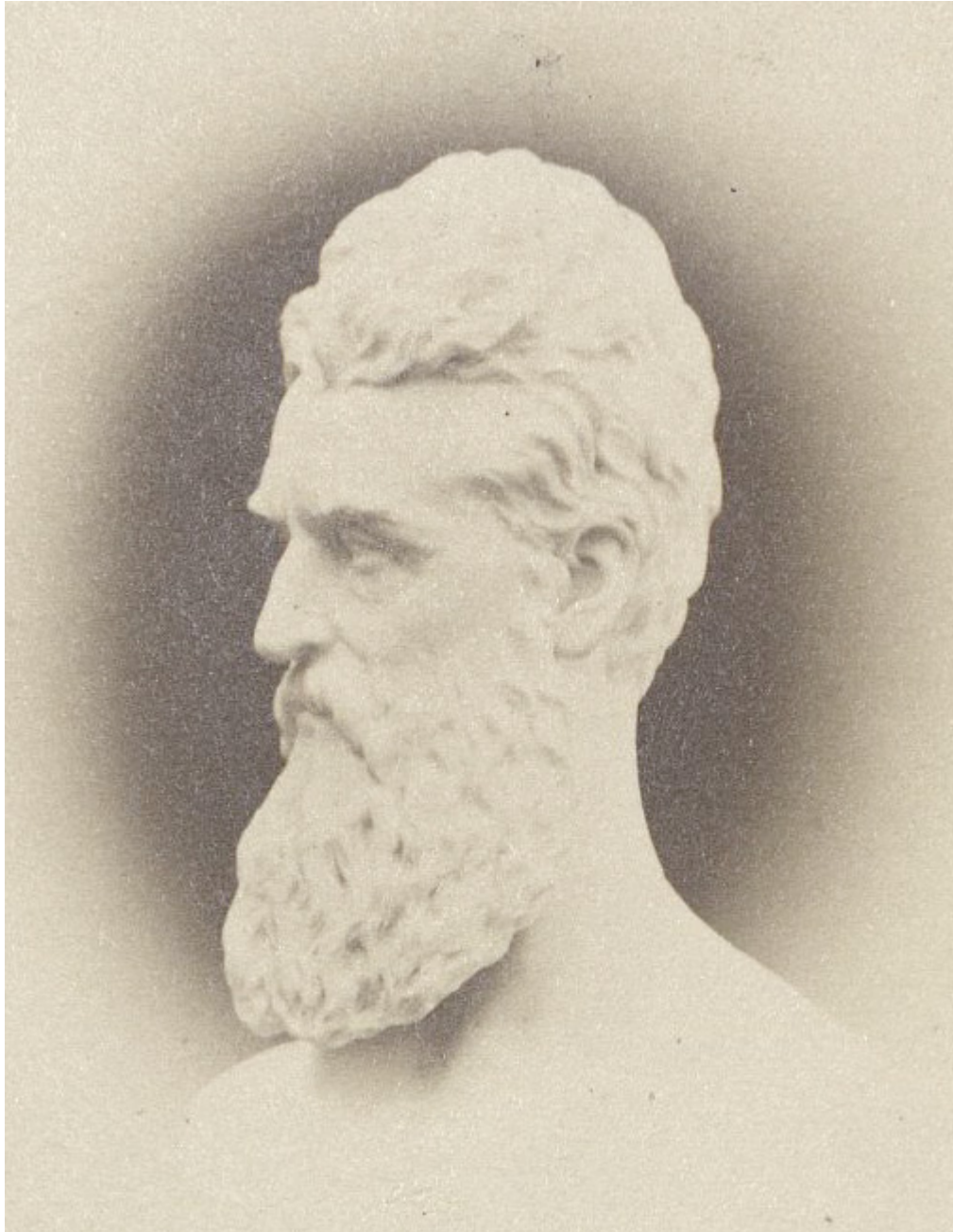
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[Gridley Howe](#), [Wendell Phillips](#), and [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#). The ceremony was catered by a black caterer who, when he saw who it was who was being honored, attempted to refuse payment and had to have a note jammed into his pocket.

In this year, the Union army would begin to enlist black soldiers, to serve of course under white officers, of course at a lower rate of pay than white soldiers. Notice this unit's drummer, who was paid at a lower rate still,

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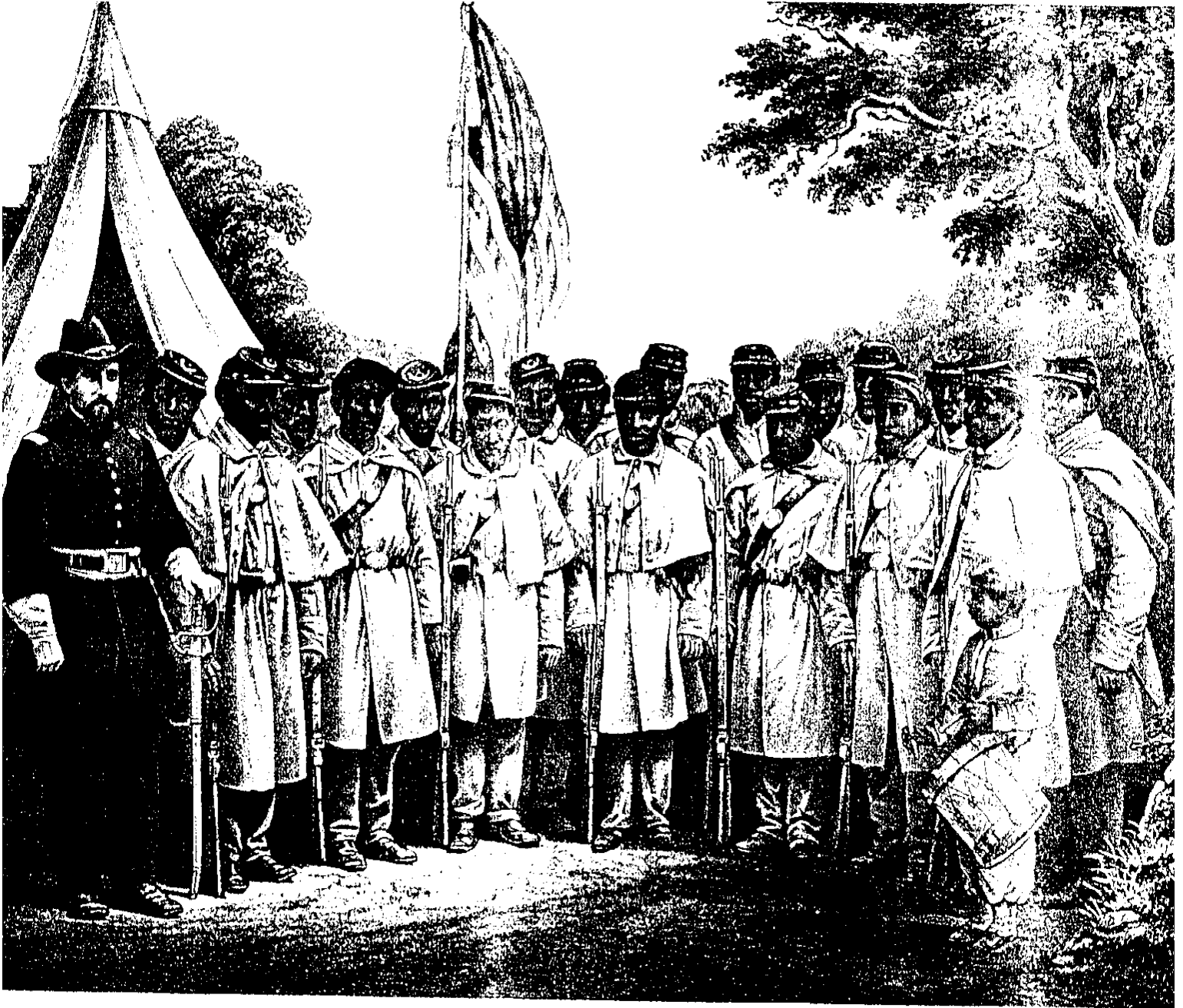
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paid less for being not only black but also, indeed, only a little boy. A quite emancipated little boy.



**COME AND JOIN US BROTHERS.**

PUBLISHED BY THE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE FOR RECRUITING COLORED REGIMENTS  
1210 CHESTNUT ST. PHILADELPHIA.

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The lithograph which pictured this little drummer was based on a daguerreotype made indoors, next door to “Roadside”, the country home of Friends [James](#) and [Lucretia Mott](#) near Philadelphia.



This was a military training camp, on which people were preparing for the task of killing other people, and it was named “Camp [William Penn](#),” after a [Quaker](#) pacifist who was being alleged to have given up the wearing



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of the sword of nobility, whose favorite punch line went:

It is not our ends that justify our means.



The image is a fraud. In the original, there is no flag waving bravely in the background. There is no tent. There is no greenery. There is no little drummer boy flanking to the right. Looking carefully at the fraud, we can see that the countenances of the black men have been sketched on, exaggerating their negroid features in such manner as to emphasize, that the important thing which we are to grasp about these Union soldiers, is their ethnicity.

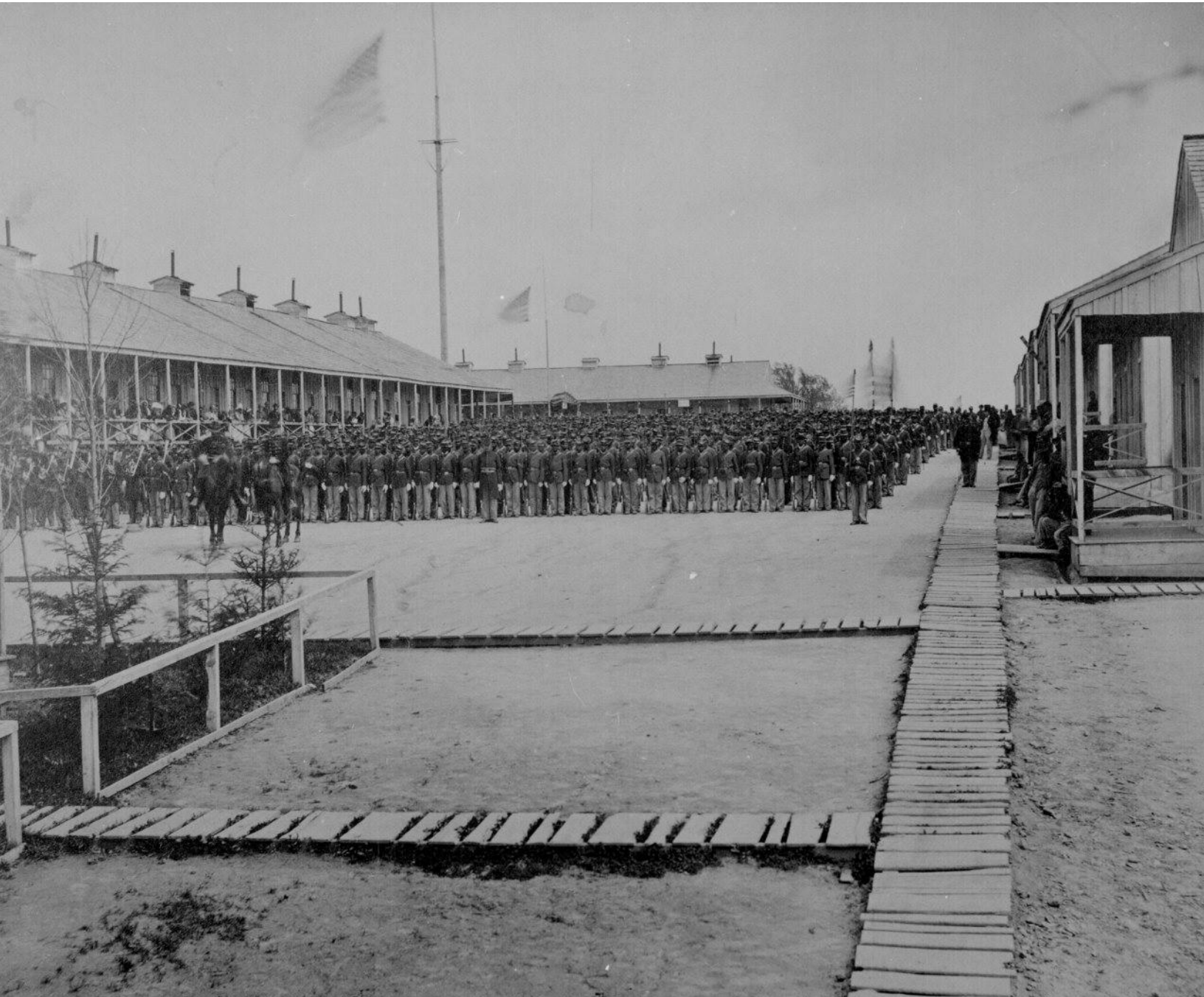




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Here is a real photograph of Camp [William Penn](#). As you can clearly see, a waving flag looks quite a bit different in a real photograph of the period!



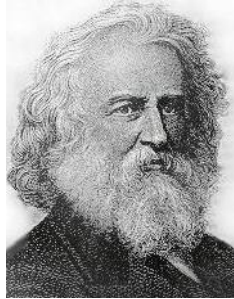
The irony of this seems rather heavy. [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#) wrote, as his contribution to the recruitment campaign for the war (what if they gave a war and nobody came?), the immortal patriotic doggerel



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“one if by day, and two if by night.”<sup>125</sup>



[Frederick Douglass](#) traveled through the cities of the North, recruiting black men to serve the Union Army. His son Lewis, age 22, and his son Charles Remond, age 19, were among the first to enlist. But the Union armies were routinely returning runaways to their owners. General McClellan ordered that slave rebellions were to be put down “with an iron hand.” But there were **so many** runaways. Finally, in Virginia, a Union general who believed in slavery, Benjamin Butler, began to declare them “contraband of war” and put them to work. Although [Abraham Lincoln](#) had twice disciplined Union generals who had freed slaves, putting slaves to work was something the President could accept, and the result was the Confiscation Act.

Colonel [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) described a celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation at Camp

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125. Well, at least that was the way Gerald Ford’s teleprompter had it, when he gave the keynote address at the Concord Bicentennial Celebration of April 19, 1975 at the Old North Bridge. And perhaps no poet has been parodied more: it’s all because, while he was at Bowdoin College in 1822 with author-to-be [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) (still [Hathorne](#)) and president-to-be [Franklin Pierce](#), he was accustomed to play whist without a helmet.

[Acting on a news story about ex-Presidents selling their autographs, I have sent a copy of this page to ex-President Gerald Rudolph Ford, along with a \$1.<sup>00</sup> bill and a reminder that in the era in question a dollar bill was worth almost precisely what a C-note is worth today, and asked if he could in good humor initial below:

X \_\_\_\_\_]

Longfellow’s thing about “one if by land, and two if by sea” was of course inaccurate in that the Atlantic Ocean didn’t ever get involved. The militia’s concern was whether the regular troops stabled in Boston were going to march down the Neck and through Roxbury, or first row themselves across the Charles River so they could march through Cambridge. In quoting Longfellow before the Concordians on April 19, 1975 as having said “one if by day, and two if by night,” Former President Gerald Rudolph Ford, Jr., seems to me to have been saying something very Thoreauvian to these people, he was almost saying:

Look, this history stuff you have been passing off is drivel, and besides, you aren’t at all like your ancestors. For one thing your ancestors didn’t worship themselves, the way you worship yourselves through your ancestors. For another thing, it’s way past time you people got busy and did something for others, rather than wanting other people to come around and make your bacon for you. Would you look at this dump, you’re turning Concord into a damned tourist trap! By creatively “misquoting” this poem, I’m going to show you how little it, and you, are worth in the great scheme of things.



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Saxton on one of the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina, that had been occupied by Northern black troops and were being protected by the ships of the US Navy.

The services began at half past eleven o'clock, with a prayer.... Then the President's Proclamation was read.... Then the colors were presented.... Then followed an incident so touching, so utterly unexpected and startling, that I can scarcely believe it on recalling, though it gave the keynote to the whole day. The very moment the speaker had ceased, and just as I took and waved the flag, which now for the first time meant anything to these poor people, there suddenly arose, close beside the platform, a strong male voice (but rather cracked and elderly), into which two women's voices instantly blended, singing as if by an impulse that could no more be repressed than the morning note of the song-sparrow. -

My Country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing!

After the ceremony the white officers visited a nearby plantation and viewed the instruments of [torture](#) still lying in the local slave-jail.

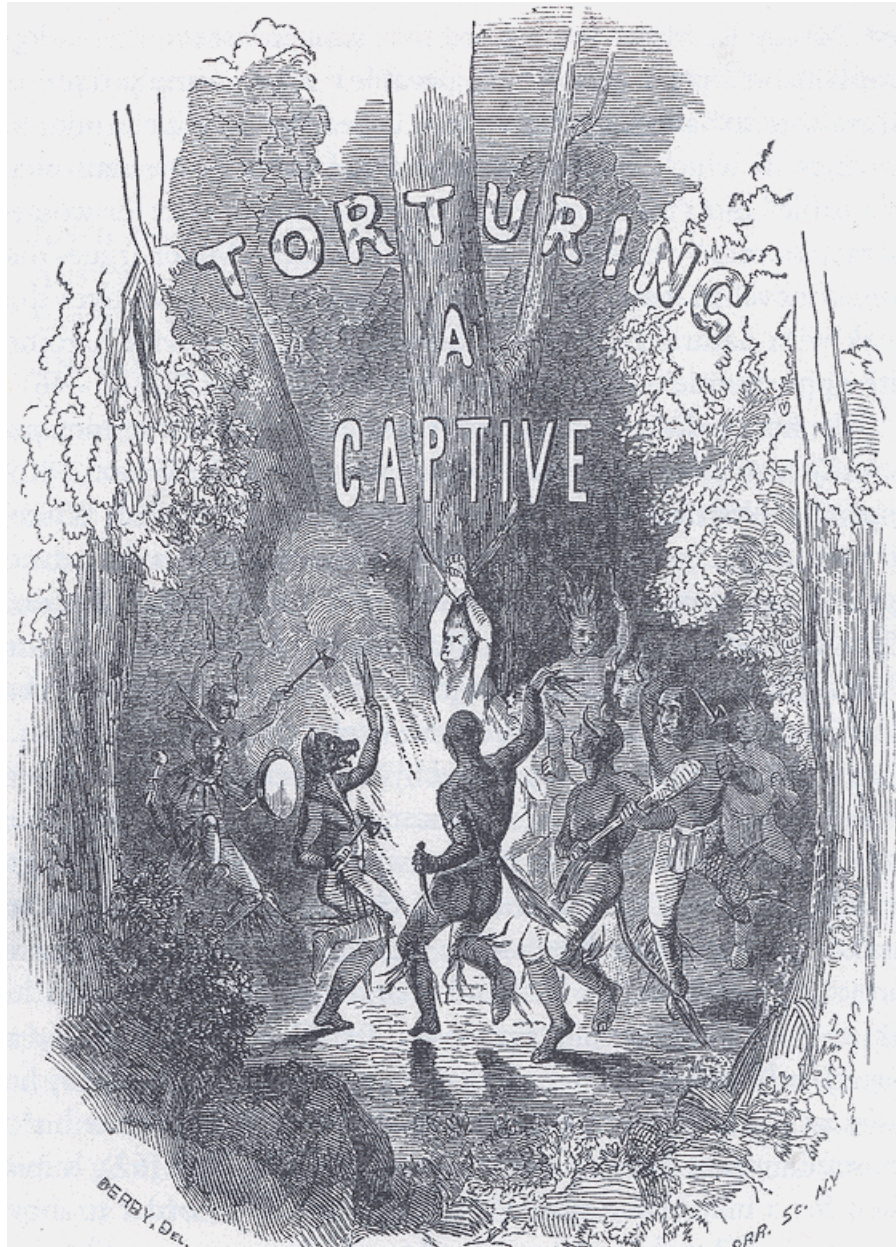
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In Beaufort, South Carolina, the Reverend Dr. [William Henry Brisbane](#), the Union officer in charge of auctioning off the lands and structures of the former slave plantations of the district, read the Emancipation Proclamation aloud to thousands of freedmen.

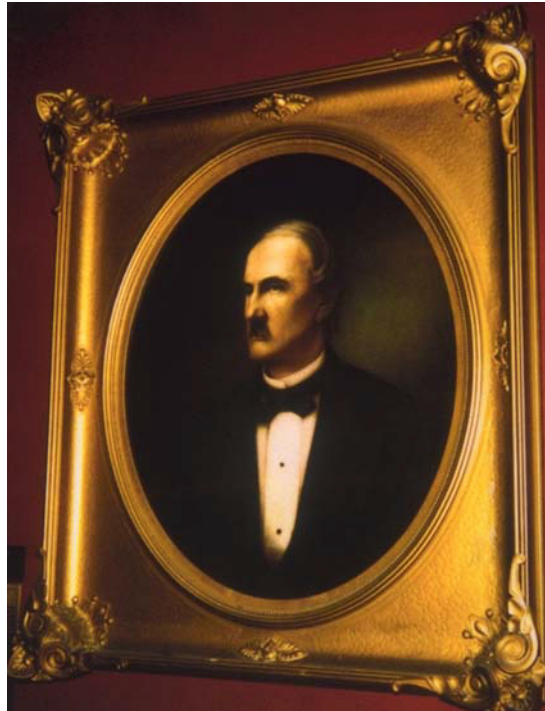
General John Pope sent General Henry Hastings Sibley and General Alfred Sully onto the Dakota reservation in [Minnesota](#), to hunt down the remaining tribespeople and get them off their land so it could be divided into



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farm acreage for white people.



RACE WAR IN MINNESOTA

(Early in this year, [Stephen Grover Cleveland](#), a future president, was 26 years of age and it was time to serve his country — so he hired a man to serve in his stead. He was just as much a draft dodger, in his era, as [William J. Clinton](#) and [George W. Bush](#), in our own era!)



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1864

October 12, Wednesday: The [Civil War](#), fought on the false issue of national union, had never aroused [Lysander Spooner](#)'s enthusiasm as had [John Brown](#)'s provocation at Harpers Ferry. At this point he publicly assailed Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, accusing him of the treason of pretending to be in favor of the abolition of human enslavement while actually seeking through strife merely to deprive the states of the South of their liberty. The Senator, a "deliberately perjured traitor to the constitution, to liberty, and to truth," had "placed the North wholly in the wrong, and the South wholly in the right." "You, and others like you have done more, according to your abilities, to prevent the peaceful abolition of slavery, than any other men in the nation...."

...the slaveholders would never have dared, in the face of the world, to attempt to overthrow a government that gave freedom to all, for the sake of establishing in its place one that should make slaves of those who, by the existing constitution, were free.



Republican politicians were aggressors, and "upon your heads, more even, if possible, than upon the slaveholders themselves, (who have acted only in accordance with their associations, interests, and avowed principles as slave-holders) rests the blood of this horrible, unnecessary, and therefore guilty, war."

[Mary Ann Day Brown](#) buried what she was being led to suppose was the body of her son [Watson Brown](#) in the Adirondacks and then set out to be the guest of [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) and [Sarah E. Sanborn](#) for a week in [Concord](#). After several days of receptions in [Boston](#), knowing that [Salmon Brown](#) planned to take his family and join a train of 40 wagons, she and her younger daughters would board ship with an ample retirement fund made up of solicited donations, to spend her remaining years with her daughter Mrs. Ellen Fablinger at various locations on the West Coast.<sup>126</sup>



[Richard Realf](#) of the [88th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment](#) wrote to Laura B. Merritt and Marian M. Cramer from Chattanooga, Tennessee (injury, railroad accident, hospital).

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126. Eventually she would have 4 children and 17 grandchildren living in various parts of California and Oregon.



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Frederick Lloyd's "[John Brown](#) Among the Pedee [Quakers](#)" appeared in successive issues of [The Annals of Iowa](#).

Thinking that whatever related to the actions of the remarkable man whose name stands at the beginning of this chapter, would have a fascinating interest, not only for his admirers but for his contemners also, we have been at some pains to glean from living witnesses the facts embraced in the following historical sketch, which having transpired within the borders of Iowa, and within a few miles of where the State Historical Society hold their sittings, makes their publication in this work exceedingly appropriate.

Fifteen miles east and a little north of Iowa City, sits the quiet little village of Springdale, the center of what is known abroad as the Pedee or Quaker settlement of Cedar County, though in point of fact the locality known in Cedar County as the Pedee Settlement proper, and which is in Iowa township, contains but a comparatively small number of Quakers, who abound more in the adjoining township of Springdale, in which the village of that name is situated. Five miles west of Springdale, in the same township, is West Branch, and two miles east, in Iowa township, Pedee Post Office and village – places in size and importance less pretending than Springdale, which, besides being supplied with a Post Office, supports a store devoted to general merchandize, a carriage and blacksmith shop, a school-house and a meeting-house, and has a population of about one hundred souls.

The Pedee Settlement so called, which derives its name from a small creek to which the earlier settlers who built their first log-cabins on its banks gave the name of Pedee, is largely composed of adherents to the Society of Friends, who, dwelling in comfortable houses, surrounded by their own teeming fields, and enjoying to the utmost the fruits of virtuous liberty and their own thrift, would gladly see all men in the possession of the same blessings God has showered upon them.

The traveler who, driving through Springdale of a hot summer's day, draws up at the delicious spring, refreshing himself from the tin dipper and his horse from the wooden bucket there confidingly kept for the public benefit,—the Christian atmosphere of the place being a sufficient guarantee for their safety,—does not see in the trim, well painted frame cottages, faced by neat blue-grass front yards, that line each side of the highway, nor in the broad-brimmed hats and scuttle-shaped bonnets that bob about, nor in any other feature of this placid and orderly little place, the least ground for speculation that here might have been conceived and planned the wildest and boldest project that ever infatuated the mind of man, and which,





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under the providence of God, was ordained as the prelude to events which shook all the world and loosened the fetters of a whole race.

The persons who harbored, and with money and counsel, assisted John Brown on the several occasions he visited Iowa City and the Pedee Settlement, and to whom we are indebted for the facts of this imperfectly written narrative, are citizens of the highest respectability, and some of them of the most eminent standing, as will be seen when we come to mention (their names in their appropriate order, and they all, though far from approving the chief act of his life which has made Brown's name historic, believe him to have been actuated by the highest and most disinterested motives. To some of his friends Brown confided the outline of his plan of operations, which finally culminated in the Harper's Ferry raid, but these disclosures were looked upon at the time as emanating from the transitory mental disturbances of an excited visionary, and as unworthy of more than passing attention. These gentlemen, in what they did toward assisting Brown and the fugitive slaves he piloted through Iowa to a land of freedom took counsel of their consciences and God's command to "hide the outcast."

The personal appearance of Brown is sufficiently familiar to the public to relieve us from the necessity of giving a particular description of it. He was five feet ten inches in height, weighed about 150 pounds, was wiry and muscular, wore a home-spun coat and a long white beard. He had a stoop in his shoulders, and in general appearance resembled an old Pennsylvania Dutch farmer. Some have attributed insanity to Brown, but we must recollect that Galileo, Columbus and General Sherman had the credit of being crazy. There can be no doubt that Brown sincerely and religiously believed it to be his mission to make war upon slavery. It may do in our day to say that he was infatuated, but a later generation will say that he was inspired.

He frequently said that he had a commission from the Almighty to free slaves. To the Hon. J. B. Grinnell, (one of those who afforded to Brown and his fugitive parties shelter and food,) he spoke in a prophetic way of great events in the future. When asked to be specific, he said, "time will tell it." In his early years Brown had become a member of the masonic order, and had studied for the Presbyterian ministry, but for thirty years before his death, he had been studying the art of war, and for this purpose had traveled over Europe examining the different systems of fortification there. He had also been a careful reader of history, and had paused with satisfaction at the name of Leonidas and the story of the pass of Thermopylae. He was generally silent except with those who had his entire confidence, with whom he talked freely. Stevens and Kagi were the only ones of his immediate party to whom he confided, usually, his intended movements. His men had the fullest confidence in him, and were always willing, without question, to perform his bidding. He always disclaimed the desire to shed



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blood, but thought that by making frequent raids into the heart of the slave territory, he would in time awaken the people of the South to a sense of the insecurity of their favorite institution, and thus induce them to abolish it. He was not cruel, and the story of his compelling prisoners to go down on their knees to him, we are assured, on the best authority, is a sheer fabrication. In religious views, he was very tolerant, as is shown by the fact of nearly all his band differing from him in religious sentiment. He only asked his men to do what they knew to be right. He urged none to join his standard—only saying that if any believed as he did, he would be glad to have their assistance in freeing slaves. The key to Brown's actions must probably he looked for in his excessive benevolence, which led him to desire to see all men enjoy the same blessings he himself possessed, united to a combative disposition, which impelled him to attempt an enforcement of his wish. It was about the close of the Presidential campaign in 1856, that Brown first visited Iowa City and the Pedee Settlement. He was then on his way east from Kansas, and was accompanied by one of his sons. The Hon. W. Penn. Clarke, (now Colonel and Paymaster in the army,) was the member of the Kansas National Committee for Iowa, and his residence being at Iowa City, made this town the chief headquarters west of the Mississippi for those who sympathized with the Free State men of Kansas. To this point, money, arms, clothing and other supplies were forwarded for distribution to those who were fighting for the freedom of Kansas. Brown was thus brought in contact with Col. Clarke, Dr. Jesse Bowen, and other residents of Iowa City, who were in active sympathy with the Free State pioneers of Kansas.

On his journeys through Iowa, Brown was generally accompanied by fugitive slaves from Missouri, whom he and his armed band escorted through our State to a haven of freedom beyond Lake Michigan. On such occasions Brown could always count on finding at the residence of Hon. J. B. Grinnell, in Grinnell, Poweshiek County, not only rest, food and shelter for himself and his party, white and black, but money and words of cheer besides. After leaving Grinnell, his next ark of safety was the Pedee Settlement, where he would quarter his men—passing through Iowa City in the night time to avoid molestation—and then retrace his steps to the State Capital, which Iowa City had not ceased to be yet, to consult with Clarke and other friends of the Free State movement in Kansas. On such occasions Brown generally required the benefit of a clear head and cool hundred, both of which he never failed to find at the office of Clarke, who often made up any deficiencies there might be in funds, or contributed the whole amount himself. But there were many others who gave of their means for this purpose, and even democrats, while denouncing abolitionists, were contributing their funds toward the escape of fugitive slaves.

It was then, as indicated above, in the autumn of 1856, that John Brown first visited the Pedee Settlement of Cedar County.



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As he alighted from his mule, (one he had captured at the battle of Black Jack, on the borders of Kansas and Missouri,) in front of the "Traveler's Rest," which was the name of the little frame tavern kept by Mr. James Townsend, in West Branch, the old man asked the landlord if he had ever heard of John Brown of Kansas notoriety, —a simple introduction, from which sprang an intimacy the closest and most confiding. The Quaker landlord thereupon proceeded to chalk John Brown's hat and mule, and both John and his beast were ever after on the free list at the "Traveler's Rest," and it would have been difficult to say who was the better entertained, the guest disposing of the buckwheat cakes and sorghum of the jolly red-faced Quaker, or the host devouring the thrilling incidents of the Kansas war related by Brown. As for the mule, he liked his treatment there so well, that he continues to reside in the Pedee Settlement to this day, being now an *attache* of the household of Mr. John H. Painter of Springdale, and having declined, despite his former warlike employment, the tender of an eligible position in an army wagon, during the war, with five half-breed companions. The writer, having met this lucky animal in the lanes of Springdale, and noted the frisk of his tail, the flap of his ears, and his general sleek appearance, and more than all, having listened to the melodious tones of his voice, is prepared to set down as a fact in these veracious pages, that he is the most prized, petted and pampered mule in that settlement— for happiness, ease and contentment, the envy of all his fellows.

Brown was in Iowa City and the Pedee Settlement several times between his first visit in 1850 and his last in 1859, but as the objects and incidents of these visits were similar, we omit a particular description of each, and shall confine ourselves to a somewhat minute detail of his proceedings and associations on the last two occasions he was in Iowa.

Generally these visits to Pedee had a two-fold object—the promotion of the Kansas Free-State cause and the concealment of negroes, but his last sojourns there were made chiefly with a view to perfecting his plans, accumulating arms, drilling, disciplining and recruiting his band, and taking measures for making Pedee a sort of base of operations for the raid against Harper's Ferry.

In the beginning of the winter of 1857-8 Brown, for the 5th time, visited the Quaker settlement of Cedar County, determined, as now appears, to spend the winter there in preparation for his Harper's Ferry raid, the plan of which he now disclosed to some of his confidants at Pedee — Jas. Townsend, John H. Painter and Dr. H. C. Gill. On this occasion he was accompanied by his band, consisting of his son Owen, Aaron D. Stevens, John Kagi, John E. Cook, [Richard Realf](#), Charles W. Moffitt, Luke J. Parsons, Charles H. Tidd, William Leeman and Richard Richardson, the latter a colored man, who, with his wife and three children, had made his escape from slavery in Missouri.

Stevens had been an enlisted man in the United States army, and



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being stationed at Fort Leavenworth, one day while drilling a squad of men at the Fort, got into an altercation with a commissioned officer, [said to have been Lieut. Longstreet, afterwards a general in the rebel army] at whom he fired, and for which a court-martial condemned him to be shot; but he escaped, and joined his fortunes to those of Brown in Kansas. Kagi, Brown's favorite, was about thirty years old and a native of Virginia; he had a tolerable education, was a fluent speaker, and an excellent stenographer. [Realf](#) was a fair scholar, of fluent speech, and a ladies' man, having left one sweetheart in Kansas and won the heart of another at Springdale. He represented himself as having been an amanuensis to Lady Byron, the poet's widow, and confessed to having been obliged to leave England on account of his participation in the Charterist riots of London in 1848. During the Kansas war, he was a correspondent from that turbulent Territory for the New York Tribune. For some reason or other, he failed to come to time at Harper's Ferry. Tidd hailed from the western part of Iowa. Just after the Harper's Ferry fight, he made his escape with Cook, and, more fortunate than the latter, succeeded in eluding his pursuers. He enlisted in the navy, during the war, under an assumed name, and died in the service, at Roanoke Island, of typhoid fever. Just before his death, he discovered to a comrade his real name and history. William Leeman was a youth from Massachusetts. He was slaughtered at Harper's Ferry, while begging for mercy. There is nothing sufficiently striking in the history of the others, except what is familiar to the public, to require recording here.

Besides those named above, who accompanied Brown from Kansas to Cedar County, he had accessions to his company in the persons of some of the young men resident in the Pedee Settlement. Among these were George B. Gill, the two Coppoc brothers, and Stewart Taylor. Mr. Gill, who held a high position in Brown's confidence, having been the secretary of the treasury of his provisional government, was detached from the party in Canada, previous to the Harper's Ferry affair, after which he returned home and married; since which his issues have been more quoted and have borne a higher premium than formerly. We never heard that he had any trouble in accounting for the contents of his portfolio. If the provisional government, of which he was a cabinet officer, ever issued bonds, they probably had the same value a like quantity of any other Brown paper had. Edwin Coppoc was hung, as will be recollected, while his brother Barclay escaped and returned to his home in Springdale, where his mother still resides, to be the subject of a requisition by the Governor of Virginia on the Executive of Iowa, and a text for much controversy in the spitfire press. He finally fell a victim to the barbarous warfare of the Missouri bushwhackers, who partially burned the supports of a railroad bridge, and the next train attempting to pass thereover, and on which Coppoc chanced to be, was precipitated many feet into the stream below, and a



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large number of Union soldiers, Barclay Coppoc among the number, instantly killed.

Brown quartered his men during this winter at the house of Mr. William Maxson, three miles north-east of Springdale^ There is an addition;? historic interest attaching to this house ?it being the first cement or gravel house ever built in this State. The farm on which it stands was bought by Mr. Maxson at the 1st government land sale held in Dubuque in 1839, and the house, which is of cottage-style in architecture, 32 by 25 feet in the main part, was built in 1849. Here Brown's men.were trained for the projected raid ?assiduously drilling with wooden swords Brown himself had his quarters at the home of Mr. John H. Painter, about a mile distant, and the men were under the immediate command of Stevens, who was the drill-master. Considerable attention was paid to discipline. Each hour of the twenty-four had its allotted duty. The men were required to rise in the morning at five o'clock, and drill and study alternately occupied the hours of' daylight. With the exception that Tue.sday and Friday evenings were set apart for regular debates, which all were required to attend, their vesper hours were generally spent according to inclination. Singing, chatting and flirting with the fair young Friends of the neighborhood, a pastime which began at early candlelight, absorbed a good portion of the time of each of the party, but especially of Cook and [Realf](#), who were considered by the simple-minded young Quaker ladies great critics in all that pertained to etiquette and polite manners. Maxson, the host, being an enthusiast in spiritual doctrine, as promulgated by the cunning Fox girls, soon converted most of his guests to a like belief, and when the weather forbid out-door enterprises, recourse was had to spirit-rapping. Besides these occupations, [Realf](#) gave occasional lectures in the neighboring villages. Cook visited the schools and made addresses to the scholars, while other less intellectual members of the party chopped wood, husked corn, and engaged in such other useful occupations as commended them to the settlers.

On Thursday, April 22, 1858, Brown, having returned from the east, (whither he had gone to arrange some preliminaries,) bid his men prepare for the grand movement. The parting from their friends, which took place on the 27th of April, is described as having been affecting in the extreme,? not an eye was dry except the two that belonged to the imperturbable Brown, and in the confusion Cook kissed a very handsome young school teacher. Miss Blake, probably in mistake for one of the old grandams of the place. It must be recollected that they left with the full expectation of striking the blow immediately, which, however, was ordered to be postponed by a convention which shortly afterwards met at Chatham, Canada West, to which point they went directly from Pedee. This convention also framed a constitution and elected provisional officers.

Postponement having been decided upon. Brown again returned to



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Kansas, and on the evening of February 4th, 1859, we once more find him on his way to Pedee, crossing the Missouri river at Nebraska City, accompanied by a few of his party, together with twelve negroes – one of the latter but a few weeks old, and born while the party were at Dr. (now General) Blunt's. After crossing the river, they marched rapidly to Mount Tabor, stopping one night on the way at Dr. Blanchard's. After resting a week at Mount Tabor, they pushed for Des Moines, putting up at night successively at the houses of Mr. Tool, Mr. Mills, and Mr. Murray. the latter's place being a little east of Irishtown. On February 18th, they crossed the Des Moines and entered the present State capital. Mr. John Teesdale, then editor of the Register, paid their ferriage. Teesdale and Brown had been old personal friends in Ohio, but until now Teesdale was not aware that Ossawatimie Brown and his Brown were one and the same. On February 20th, they reached Grinnell, and became the temporary guests of the present representative of the Fourth District in Congress, who was at home then much more than on the 14th of June when Gen. Rousseau paid his respects to him, and who delivered a discourse in the church at Grinnell to Brown and his party, besides many of the citizens of the town who were attracted by the novelty of the occasion, and contributed a generous sum to help them on their way.

On the 25th of February, Brown, with his party, for the last time, gained the hospital hamlets of Pedee, having passed through Iowa City the night previous.

It immediately became street talk in Iowa City that Brown, with a large party of fugitive slaves, was in the vicinity; and, as a reward of three thousand dollars had been offered by the authorities of Missouri for the arrest of the negroes, the disinterested advocates of the rigid enforcement of the fugitive slave law, who cared nothing particular about other laws, began to discuss the propriety of collecting a mob, marching on Pedee and capturing Brown and his party. Sam "Workman, then Post Master at Iowa City, was the captain of the gang organized for this purpose, but Brown having returned a reply breathing quiet defiance to Workman's threat of capturing him, the Post Master, after consulting his friend Capt, Kelly, an Irish gentleman of great eminence, that is to say, six feet and seven inches tall, deferred the undertaking.

At this stage of the proceedings, Mr. Grinnell, fearing trouble, proceeded to Chicago to endeavor to secure a box car, in order that the negroes might be removed quietly. Mr. Tracy, the superintendent, refused to allow the negroes to pass over the railroad, being afraid of a prosecution under the fugitive slave law. Tracy, however, gave Grinnell a draft for fifty dollars, and this draft Grinnell handed to Brown on his return from Chicago. While this was going on the United States Marshal, Summers, was at Davenport, alleging that he had a warrant for the arrest of Brown and his party. At this juncture, W. Penn. Clarke, who had been absent, returned home, apprehending



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difficulty and even the I08B of life, as he knew Brown would fight rather than be taken. Shortly after Clarke's return, Brown visited Iowa City, (as he frequently did while stopping at Pedee). Hearing of Clarke's return. Brown sent to request Clarke to visit him at Dr. Bowen's, where he was to stay over night. Here Clarke learned of the effort Grinnell had made, and of its failure. After some discussion, Clarke undertook to obtain a close box car in which to run the negroes through to Chicago. Accordingly, Clarke set out by the early train next morning, and Brown was to be ready next day with his entire party, at West Liberty, a station on the railroad fifteen miles east of Iowa City, and ten miles south of Springdale. It was finally agreed that Clarke should send some one to pilot Brown out of the city, and that the latter should leave in the night, and avoid the main road till he got some distance from town. Accordingly, Col Clarke, in company with Major L. A. Duncan, {now the editor of the Niles, Michigan, Times, then of the Iowa City Republican,) knocked at the door of Col. S. C. Trowbridge, who had been selected for this delicate duty. It being by this time midnight, the Colonel was well into his first slumber, but immediately awoke, and hastily put himself in such light marching order as to go to the door. He readily promised to perform the duty assigned him, merely stipulating that he should do it in his own way. Therefore Trowbridge, by four o'clock, was at Dr. Bowen's, where Brown and Kagi slept. One of Sam Workman's men was keeping watch over Brown's horse in Bowen's stable. The early movements of Brown were probably not contemplated in Workman's strategy, which undoubtedly was to take Brown in town that morning, and then make an easy conquest of his party, deprived of its head, at Pedee. That as it may. Brown and Trowbridge, each on his proper horse, and Kagi on foot, were soon floundering in the darkness and mud of the "upper Muscatine road," bound for Pedee, among whose quiet cottages Trowbridge parted for all time from the adventurers, in the morning gray.

The most difficult part of the plan was to procure the car from the railroad company, but this difficulty soon melted before the commendable finesse of Clarke, who called on Hon. Hiram Price, then Secretary of the railroad company, to whom he confided his business. Price had no control over the cars, but gave Clarke a note of introduction to Mr. Moak, the Deputy Superintendent. With this note from Price, ?ind Tracy's draft, which he had got from Brown, Clarke retraced his steps to West Liberty, where he found Brown waiting, his party being concealed in Keith's Steam Mill. As the train bound east would soon be along, despatch was all important. The agent. Miller, had just gone to dinner, about a quarter of a mile off. Enoch Lewis, an old man, volunteered to bring him. The agent was soon at the hotel, where by this time Clarke and Brown had made a junction. To obtain the car, it was necessary for Clarke to make the agent believe the railroad officers knew and connived at what was being done. So Clarke showed him the note from Price introducing him to Moak,



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and asked him if he knew the signature. Of course he recognized it as the sign manual of the Secretary of the road. In the same manner was exhibited to him the draft from Tracy, which he likewise knew to be in the handwriting of the Superintendent. Clarke then asked him if he had a close box car, and the cost of running it to Chicago. He answered that he had such a car, and that the price would be fifty dollars. Thereupon he was handed Tracy's check, and Clarke told him he wanted the car at once down at the mill, and that it was not his (Miller's) business to know what was going to be put into it. The car was accordingly run down the track in front of Keith's mill, and the fugitives, with the white men Brown had with him, were loaded in as freight - Stevens being at one end of the car and Kagi at the other. All of the men, both white and black, were heavily armed. Clarke, Brown and Kagi dined at the hotel together. During this repast, Clarke gave Brown ten dollars to help him on his way, and advised him to go home and take some rest, which he promised to do.

When the passenger train came along. Brown got into the car with the negroes. By this time it was noised abroad what was going on, and the whole town of West Liberty was out, all being in sympathy with Brown and his fugitives. Clarke's freight car soon formed a link in the chain of coaches. Clarke and Kagi got into the passenger car to be prepared for emergencies, and with a shout of approval and sympathy from the people of West Liberty, off the train started for Davenport.

Brown and his party arrived without molestation at Chicago, where they changed cars, taking another branch of the underground railroad for Canada, where they all arrived in due time. Tracy, the Superintendent. swore some, when the negroes were unloaded at the Chicago depot. A short time after, Clarke apologized to Mr. Farnum, the President of the road, for the harmless imposition he had practiced on the agent at West Liberty, so that he did not lose his place.

Shortly before Brown's last departure from Pedee, he effected a sale of such plunder as had been necessarily employed in the transportation of negroes and arms from Missouri and Kansas, such as mules, wagons, stoves and cooking utensils, and tents and other camp equipage, by which he realized a considerable sum. In all business of this kind, his trusty and judicious friend, Squire Painter, was invariably made available. Painter at that time was a Justice of the Peace, and signalized his term of office by uniting in wedlock, "like white folks," (including possibly the usual labial salutations,) a colored couple of Brown's party from Missouri, who sought refuge and matrimony at Pedee. It was Painter also, who, after Brown had gone, boxed up the latter's Sharp's rifles and revolvers, -196 of each- marked "carpenter's tools," hauled them to the railroad station at West Liberty, and from thence shipped them by rail to Brown at Harper's Ferry, directed to a fictitious consignee, as previously agreed upon between him and Brown. In this way the





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arms "carried well," as they also did after they had reached their destination.

Before their final adieu to Pedee, Brown's men, who affectionately designated their commander as "Uncle," all inscribed their names in one of the bed-chambers of Mr. Maxson's house under the caption of "Captain Brown's Little Band," as may be seen to this day; for although this "handwriting on the wall," was simply done with a common lead pencil, such is the reverence in which the memory of Brown and his martyr band is held in that vicinity, where they were so well known and so greatly loved, that every memento of their sojourn at Pedee is preserved as jealously as were the two tables by the Israelites.

Pending the affair at Harper's Ferry, their Pedee confidants were kept well informed by one and another of Brown's party of their intended movements. Barclay Coppoc, writing to Painter from "Parts Unknown, Aug. 29th, 1859," says enigmatically, "Our boss has got quite a number of hands on the job, and he talks of getting a few more, so as to shove things right through. Everything seems to be working along smoothly, and if all goes well a few days more, you will hear from us again."

[Realf](#), as early as April 30th, 1858, writes to Dr. Gill from Chatham, Canada West: "Here we intend to remain till we have perfected our plans, which will be in about ten days or two weeks, after which we start immediately for *China*. Yesterday and this morning we have been very busy in writing to Gerrit Smith, Wendell Phillips and others of like kin, to meet us in this place on Saturday the 8th of May. to adopt our constitution, decide a few matters, and bid us good-bye. *Then we start.* We are in good spirits. The sorrow has gone, and now we have nerved our pulses like steel. \* \* \* The signals and mode of writing are (the old man informs me,) all arranged. \* \* \* Remember me to all who know our business, but to all others be dumb as death."

The following letter from Cook, written in a strain of prophetic and poetic melancholy, has its margins covered with cypher characters, doubtless bearing to the initiated more particular information than the body of the letter contains, but any who would sigh for their meaning should be better at figures than we.

"HARPERS' FERRY, Aug. 10, 1859.

DEAR FRIENDS:— I have been waiting for a long, long time in this land of darkness. The longest night must have its morrow, and if Egyptian darkness has made the gloom still darker, the brighter will the dawning be. A light is breaking in this southern sky, and my glad eyes are gazing on its beams: for well I know that they are heralds fair of the bright glories of the coming day; that my hours of watching and of waiting now are o'er, and my glad heart is thrilling with the joy which morning light has brought. Like sacred messengers they speak to me. and tel! me those fair beams proclaim the birth of a better, brighter era. And though the dawn will usher in the day, and though the day will bring its



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labor and its care, yet gladly shall I hail its coming. Yes, gladly shall I greet the labors and the cares which day will bring. Though sometimes day is clouded at the dawn, and oft, I know, it is ushered in mid tempest and mid storms, yet though the lightnings flash and thunders roll along the sky's blue dome, yet when those storms are o'er, a purer air and brighter sky await us.

We see the gathering tempest in the sky;  
We see the black clouds as along they roll;  
We see from out the gloom the lightning fly.  
Overthrowing all who would their course control.  
We see their flashes as they light the gloom.  
Which o'er the morning's deep blue sky was cast.  
We hear the deep thunder's echoing boom.  
That tells the death-descending bolt has past;  
We see the sunlight pierce the gloom of night.  
Which those dark clouds o'er morning's light had cast.  
And roll them back upon their rapid flight.  
That we may hail the rainbow's beam at last."

And I, though clouds should shroud the coming morn, will gaze with joy upon their darkened frowns, or hail the lightning as it speeds along, as a bright gleam which whispers to my soul of peace and love. And the loud thunder with its echoing roll, *will be so to me*, a thrilling tone of freedom and of God. For oh, I know those clouds will break—the storm will pass—the sunshine beam again, and men, rejoicing, gaze upon its golden light.

I have been sick, and still am weak in body, though my soul is strong and firm in the eternal truth which God has written on my heart, and breathed upon the winds which sweep along the fields. I feel a glorious reverence for the future hours; a holy joy that makes me sometimes think I almost stand in the bright reality of my hopes. My spirit seems to drink the inspiration of the scene, and I scarcely feel the weakness of my body. I am ready, waiting for my task. *I shall not have long to wait*. The harvest is ripe, and the husbandman is almost ready. *He* has gazed over the field, and found that *all was good*. I but await his mandate. How I want to see you now. I have no words to tell my yearning after friends and home. Oh, I would love to gaze upon them now: to hear the tones that taught my infant lips to utter father, mother, sister, brother. But this may not be. God be with and bless them. As I cannot see *you*, please accept, in these brief lines, the love and affection of a son and brother. When next I write, I shall have news of more importance. Good-bye, and may God bless and prosper you, one and all, now and ever,



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is the wish and prayer of him who here subscribes himself.

Your friend and brother,  
J. EDWIN BYRON."

There was weeping and sore trouble at Pedee when the news came from Harper's Ferry of Brown's battle and surrender. At first, the brief statement was made by telegraph that a crazy man, supposed to be "Ossawattomie Brown," had captured the Government Arsenal, and with less than twenty men, white and black, was holding his assailants, Virginia chivalry and United States marines, at bay. The public supposed who this rash raider was, but many at Pedee knew it to be Brown, and anticipated the catastrophe, next day announced, that Brown had been captured, with nearly all his men who were not slain in the fight. Painter, Maxson, Gill, Townsend and their families, as well as many others, mourned the inevitable doom of their friend Brown, in whose character, glowing with purity of intention, self-abnegation and Christian heroism, they saw not a flaw; while several youthful maidens of grace and refinement, sorrowed for betrothed ones butchered at the Ford, groaning under wounds in the cells of Charlestown jail, or flying outlaws, with every man's hand against them.

But while these lamented, the Pharisees of Pedee took early steps to clear their skirts of all complicity with Brown. Accordingly, a public meeting was called in Pedee township, which "resolved," with more zeal for appearances than for geographical truth, that Maxson did not live in Pedee township, and that the odium of harboring Brown's men, while training for Harper's Ferry, did not rest on the shoulders of that township. Thus, ere the Democratic rooster crew thrice, or even once, over the alleged responsibility of the anti-slavery party for Brown's misadventure, (which the leaders of that party, by the way, falsely, cowardly and sneakingly denied,) he had been denied by some, if not the chief of his disciples. Maxson, whose farm was situated partly in Springdale and partly in Pedee, but whose house was in the latter township, was astonished to hear how easy a landslide his premises had made, and in his subsequent communications with the spirit of John Brown, which he avers he constantly holds, he has dated his missives to the spirit-land from Springdale, instead of Pedee. As soon as it became known that Barclay Coppoc had escaped from Harper's Ferry to his home at Pedee, Gov. Wise, of Virginia, made a requisition on Gov. Kirkwood for the return of Coppoc to Virginia. This requisition was defective in form and in substance, probably intentionally made so, in order that a warrant should be refused, and then a clamor made over it, for the purpose of "firing the Southern heart." At all events, Coppoc was not surrendered under it to the Virginia authorities. On the contrary, the young men of Pedee formed themselves into a military company for Coppoc's protection, which numbered seventy-five active members, not including those who were ready to act, but did not attend its



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meetings. This company, the members of which were all well armed, had its ramifications in various parts of the surrounding country, and a sharp look-out was kept on the movements of Mr. Camp, (the Virginia officer charged with Coppoc's capture,) who was evidently a placid gentleman, worried by no passion for seeing strange and noted places, for he never as much as made his appearance within ten miles of Pedee, though that settlement then, next to Harper's Ferry and Charlestown, engaged public attention more than any other.

As soon as the requisition for Coppoc reached the Governor at Des Moines, the following despatch was sent, post-haste, to Pedee:

"DES MOINES. Jan. 24, 1860.

MR. PAINTER:— There is an application for young Coppoc from the Governor of Virginia, and the Governor here will be compelled to surrender him. If he is in your neighborhood, tell him to make his escape from the United States.

YOUR FRIEND."

Who despatched the courier with the above advice, (which Coppoc followed so far as to leave Pedee soon after,) is not positively known to the writer, but probably Col. Ed. Wright and Hon. J.W. Cattell knew something about it, and it was said that Mr. Grinnell had his best horse lamed on the occasion. Before their execution Cook and Coppoc each communicated with their friends at Pedee. Coppoc's letter, which is quite long, is dated Dec. 10th, 1859, six days before his execution.

It contains no evidence of fear on the part of its writer, but is devoted to the correction of false statements and impressions made by the newspapers, his wishes as to the final disposition of his body, apologies to friends for not writing to them individually, commendations of the sheriff and jailer who had him in custody, and allusions to the bounteous fare provided for him and his fellow-prisoners, chiefly by sympathizing friends at a distance. He says, "To-day we have received a box of nick-nacks from Philadelphia, and some of the citizens here send us in a pie now and then; so you may know we live fat, but it is only fattening us up fur the gallows,—rather poor consolation." Cook's letter is written the day before his execution, and is as follows:

"CHARLESTOWN JAIL. VA., Dec. 15, 1859.

Mr. and Mrs. James Townsend and family:

MY DEAR FRIENDS.—I have time only to scratch a few words of remembrance, as a token that the happy past —your generous friendship and your love— is not forgotten by the stranger to whom your affection gave the endearing name of son and brother, — that the memory of all your kindness is still fresh and green upon the page of his memory.

We struck a blow for the freedom of the slave. We



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failed, and those who are not already dead, must die, and that upon the scaffold. One more day, and the scenes of life for me will close forever. Remember me kindly, when I have passed the vale of shadows, where I hope in a few years to meet you. Accept my love, my God-speed and my last farewell. In the soul's affection, now and ever yours, JOHN E. COOK."

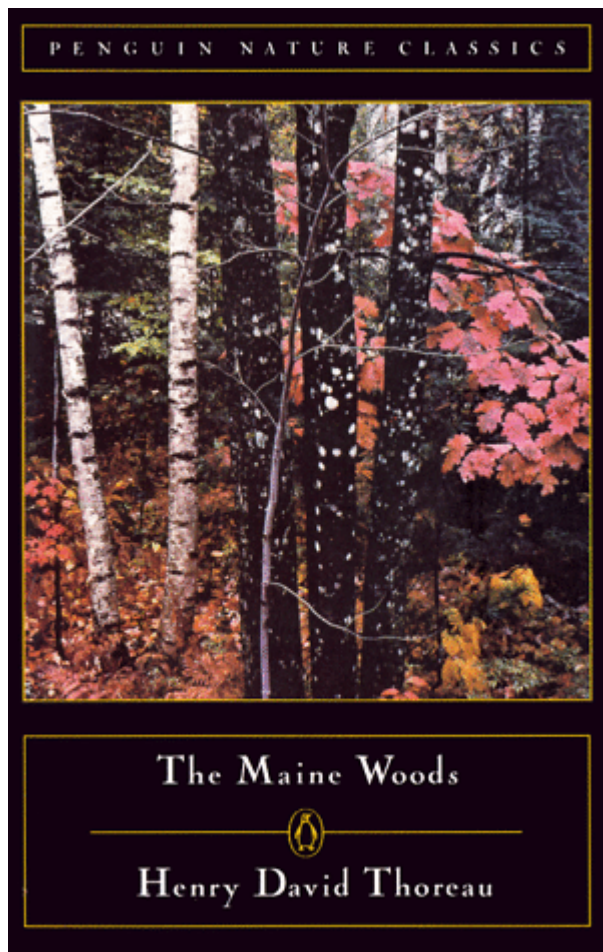


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1870

Winter: While wintering in Yosemite Valley and working at James M. Hutchings's sawmill, John Muir read THE MAINE WOODS (but not yet [WALDEN](#)).



Lawrence Buell has offered, in *THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGINATION: THOREAU, NATURE WRITING, AND THE FORMATION OF AMERICAN CULTURE*, that:

[T]he young Muir saw [Waldo Emerson](#) as a hero, whatever his second thoughts, before he saw [Henry Thoreau](#) as one. Muir almost surely



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did not read [WALDEN](#) until the year after he met Emerson.



It is to be noted, however, that Professor Buell does not suspect Muir in his cabin in the 1870s, as he suspects Thoreau in his cabin on Walden Pond, of having tried to make himself just another of those cranky [hermits](#) in just another of those secluded nooks. He writes that Muir “probably built his shack over a Yosemite sawmill without thinking about Thoreau, even though he already had begun to read him”:

[O]ne of WALDEN's first enthusiastic readers, [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#), had serendipitously built a cabin retreat for himself on his New Bedford property. Thoreau and Ricketson were but two variants of a long-publicized type of American eccentric: the cranky hermit, who for a variety of possible reasons retreated to his (or her) secluded nook. [Continuing in an endnote: For an amusing bestiary of profiles, see Carl Sifakis, [AMERICAN ECCENTRICS](#) (New York and Bicester, England: [Facts on File](#), 1984). His roster includes Francis Phyle, “the hermit of Mount Holly”; Sarah Bishop, “the atrocity hermitess”; Albert Large, “the hermit amidst the wolves”; and many more.]... [[Henry Thoreau](#)] elevates the Horatian and Virgilian love of rural retirement, a neoclassical motif of great resonance to the Anglo-American squierarchy, a motif on which Thoreau had written a college essay, to the level of a lifework. ...Some readers will resist this side of Thoreau's genius.... Thus we normalize the Walden sojourn by imagining it as an efficient way to get a lot of writing done, or normalize WALDEN by positing a firm aesthetic structure or ideational commitment. This tends to suppress both the worst and the best about Thoreau.... In the early 1870s, John Muir probably built his shack over a Yosemite sawmill without thinking about Thoreau, even though he already had begun to read him. By the 1890s, John Burroughs was far more aware of Thoreau's shadow, often evincing a prickly, hypersensitive anxiety of influence; but Burroughs probably was not copying Thoreau when he built his cabin, Slabsides. In modern times, however, the commemoration of Muir and Burroughs as naturist prophets has been cross-pollinated by the myth of a Thoreauvian tradition.



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Muir gets a free pass from Buell — something which he seems remarkably unwilling to allow to Thoreau (perhaps this Harvard man does not feel as threatened, by Muir, as he feels threatened by Thoreau).

Muir began offering guided tours of Yosemite, and made his 1st visit to the Hetch Hetchy valley.

After moving to the West Coast, [Salmon Brown](#) had been a sheep rancher in the Bridgeville area for many years before moving on to Portland, Oregon. The Browns had settled in Red Bluff until this year, in which they moved to Humboldt County. [Mary Ann Day Brown](#) is said to have bought a house in Rohnerville on Church Street, and her stepson Salmon and his family moved in next door. Mary's daughters Annie, Sarah, and Ellen settled in Rohnerville. Salmon would become a pioneer sheep rancher in the Bridgeville area and own more than 3,000 acres.

**JOHN BROWN**







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1876

January 3, Monday: James Beatty Fablinger got married with [Ellen Brown](#), youngest daughter of [John Brown](#), at the Rohnerville, California Methodist Episcopal Church.





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**1877**

Fall: [Richard Realf](#) began to lecture throughout the midwest on “Temperance,” on “Battle Flashes,” on “Public Schools and their Freedom from Sectarian Control,” on “[John Brown](#),” on “[Shakespeare](#),” on “Poetry and Labor,” etc.

An English businessman living in [Boston](#), Herbert Radclyffe (1847-1900), donated posts and chains to enclose the grave of the two Army soldiers at the [Old North Bridge](#).



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1878

When [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) became entangled with [General John Cochrane](#), one of [Gerrit Smith](#)'s nephews, in a controversy over the accuracy of the original edition of Octavius Brooks Frothingham's biography of his uncle (accusing Sanborn of distortions as to his uncle's complicity in [John Brown](#)'s raid on Harpers Ferry), he was able to disengage himself by letting General Cochrane inspect letters sent to himself and to [Edwin Morton](#) that were in the handwriting of his aunt, and were clearly signed by his uncle.

Friend [John Greenleaf Whittier](#) voiced the nature of the post-Civil War compromise which allowed American whites to pretend that slavery had been prohibited by the XIIIth Amendment:

*For myself I do not feel called upon to enter into these present contests. The game seems to me hardly worth the candle. The issues seem small and poor. I suppose I am getting old, and am disposed to ask for peace in my day. I have had enough of fighting in the old days.*





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February: Former Governor of the [Kansas Territory](#) Robinson wrote: “I never had much doubt that [Capt. John Brown](#) was the author of the blow at Pottawatomic, for the reason that he was the only man who comprehended the situation, and saw the absolute necessity of some such blow, and had the nerve to strike it.”

A report from Walt Whitman:

## “Specimen Days”

### FEBRUARY DAYS

Mid-afternoon. — One of my nooks is south of the barn, and here I am sitting now, on a log, still basking in the sun, shielded from the wind. Near me are the cattle, feeding on corn-stalks. Occasionally a cow or the young bull (how handsome and bold he is!) scratches and munches the far end of the log on which I sit. The fresh milky odor is quite perceptible, also the perfume of hay from the barn. The perpetual rustle of dry corn-stalks, the low sough of the wind round the barn gables, the grunting of pigs, the distant whistle of a locomotive, and occasional crowing of chanticleers, are the sounds.

February 26, Tuesday: [Lysander Spooner](#) wrote to Octavius Brooks Frothingham.


Since [John Brown](#) wrote very little about his incursion into Virginia, [Lysander Spooner](#)'s broadside and writings on slavery offer an understandable and very possible context for events at Harpers Ferry. [Brown](#) was certainly familiar with [Spooner](#)'s work. [Gerrit Smith](#), [Spooner](#)'s benefactor, had been very close to Brown, supplying funds for his stays in Kansas and for the Harpers Ferry raid. Smith made a point of sending his friends copies of [Spooner](#)'s UNCONSTITUTIONALITY OF SLAVERY. [Brown](#) and [Spooner](#) met in Boston shortly before Harpers Ferry. And although he was told little about the details of the raid beforehand, [Spooner](#) had confidence in its success and, after the raid, admired [Brown](#) as a model of just action.



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1881

 Congress dismissed the board of three commissioners of Freedman's Savings and Trust Company and authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to appoint the Comptroller of the Currency to oversee the bank's residual affairs. The comptroller was to submit annual reports to Congress. Some depositors and their descendants would for more than 30 years be petitioning Congress for reimbursement for losses.<sup>127</sup> In [Frederick Douglass](#)'s revision to his [NARRATIVE](#) issued in this year, on page 318, he redacted that "the horrors" that [John Brown](#) had planned had made him shudder "but it was the shudder one feels at the execution of a murderer."



February 19, day: [Kansas](#) made itself the 1st state to ban all alcoholic beverages.

The initial complete public performance of [Franz Schubert](#)'s Symphony no.3 D.200 was given in the Crystal Palace, London, 66 years after it had been composed.

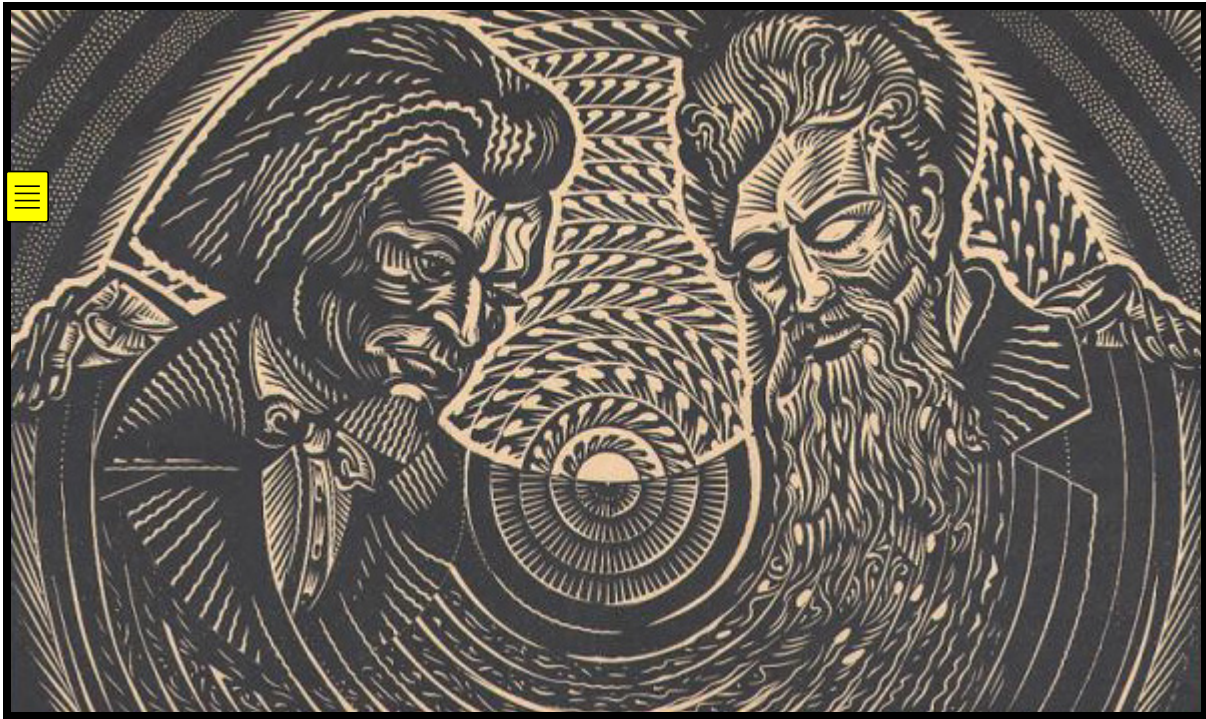
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127. Several committees of Congress investigated the affairs of the Freedman's Bank and received petitions from persons who sought compensation for losses suffered when the bank failed. Information concerning these matters can be found among the records of the U.S. Senate (Record Group 46) and the US House of Representatives (Record Group 233). Researchers should also examined the Congressional Serial Set for published reports and documents regarding Freedman's Bank.

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May 30, Monday: [Frederick Douglass](#), a trustee of Storer College, [Harpers Ferry](#), West Virginia, delivered, as the Decoration Day address upon the institution's 14th anniversary, a speech entitled simply "[John Brown](#)."



Among the guests on the platform was Andrew Hunter, who had while Douglass had been fleeing to Canada and then England been the District Attorney of Charles Town, participating in the prosecution and conviction of [Captain Brown](#) for murder and treason. Imagine what he must have been thinking!

HARPERS FERRY, FROM THE POTOMAC SIDE



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HARPERS FERRY, FROM THE BLUE RIDGE





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## INTRODUCTION.


In substance, this address, now for the first time published, was prepared several years ago, and has been delivered in many parts of the North. Its publication now in pamphlet form is due to its delivery at [Harpers Ferry, West Virginia](#), on Decoration day, 1881, and to the fact that the proceeds from the sale of it are to be used toward the endowment of a John Brown Professorship in Storer College, Harpers Ferry — an institution mainly devoted to the education of colored youth.

That such an address could be delivered at such a place, as such a time, is strikingly significant, and illustrates the rapid, vast and wonderful changes through which the American people have been passing since 1859. Twenty years ago Frederick Douglass and others were mobbed in the city of Boston, and driven from Tremont Temple for uttering sentiments concerning [John Brown](#) similar to those contained in this address. Yet now he goes freely to the very spot where John Brown committed the offense which caused all Virginia to clamor for his life, and without reserve or qualification, commends him as a hero and martyr in the cause of liberty. This incident is rendered all the more significant by the fact that Hon. Andrew Hunter, of Charlestown, — the District Attorney who prosecuted John Brown and secured his execution,— sat on the platform directly behind Mr. Douglass during the delivery of the entire address and at the close of it shook hands with him, and congratulated him, and invited him to Charlestown (where John Brown was hanged), adding that if Robert E. Lee were living, he would give him his hand also.

## ADDRESS.

Not to fan the flame of sectional animosity now happily in the process of rapid and I hope permanent extinction; not to revive and keep alive a sense of shame and remorse for a great national crime, which has brought own punishment, in loss of treasure, tears and blood; not to recount the long list of wrongs, inflicted on my race during more than two hundred years of merciless bondage; nor yet to draw, from the labyrinths of far-off centuries, incidents and achievements wherewith to rouse your passions, and enkindle your enthusiasm, but to pay a just debt long due, to vindicate in some degree a great historical character, of our own time and country, one with whom I was myself well acquainted, and whose friendship and confidence it was my good fortune to share, and to give you such recollections, impressions and facts, as I can, of a grand, brave and good old man, and especially to promote a better understanding of the raid upon Harpers Ferry of which he was the chief, is the object of this address.

In all the thirty years' conflict with slavery, if we except the late tremendous war, there is no subject which in its interest and importance will be remembered longer, or will form a more thrilling chapter in American history than this strange, wild, bloody and mournful drama. The story of it is still fresh in the minds of many who now hear me, but for the sake of those who may have forgotten its details, and in order to have our subject in its entire range more fully and clearly before us at the outset, I will briefly state the facts in that extraordinary transaction.

On the night of the 16th of October, 1859,  there appeared near the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, a party of nineteen men — fourteen white and five colored. They were not only armed themselves, but had brought with them a large supply of arms for such persons as might join them. These men invaded Harpers Ferry, disarmed the watchman, took possession of the arsenal, rifle-factory, armory and other government property at that place, arrested and made prisoners nearly all the prominent citizens of the neighborhood, collected about fifty slaves, put bayonets into the hands of such as were able and willing to fight for their liberty, killed three men, proclaimed general [emancipation](#), held the ground more than thirty hours, were subsequently overpowered and nearly all killed, wounded or captured, by a body of United States troops, under command of Colonel [Robert E. Lee](#), since famous as the rebel Gen. Lee. Three out of the nineteen invaders were captured whilst fighting, and one of these was Captain John Brown, the man who originated, planned and commanded the expedition. At the time of his capture Capt. Brown was supposed to be mortally





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wounded as he had several ugly gashes and bayonet wounds on his head and body; and apprehending that he might speedily die, or that he might be rescued by his friends, and thus the opportunity of making him a signal example of slave-holding vengeance would be lost, his captors hurried him to Charlestown two miles further within the border of Virginia, placed him in prison strongly guarded by troops, and before his wounds were healed he was brought into court, subjected to a nominal trial, convicted of high treason and inciting slaves to insurrection, and was executed. His corpse was given to his woe-stricken widow, and she, assisted by Antislavery friends, caused it to be borne to [North Elba, Essex County, N.Y.](#), and there his dust now reposes amid the silent, solemn and snowy grandeur of the Adirondacks.

Such is the story; with no line softened or hardened to my inclining. It certainly is not a story to please, but to pain. It is not a story to increase our sense of social safety and security, but to fill the imagination with wild and troubled fancies of doubt and danger. It was a sudden and startling surprise to the people of [Harpers Ferry](#), and it is not easy to conceive of a situation more abundant in all the elements of horror and consternation.

They had retired as usual to rest, with no suspicion that an enemy lurked in the surrounding darkness. They had quietly and trustingly given themselves up to “tired Nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep,” and while thus all unconscious of danger, they were roused from their peaceful slumbers by the sharp crack of the invader’s rifle, and felt the keen-edged sword of war at their throats, three of their numbers being already slain.

Every feeling of the human heart was naturally outraged at this occurrence, and hence at the moment the air was full of denunciation and execration. So intense was this feeling, that few ventured to whisper a word of apology. But happily reason has her voice as well as feeling, and though slower in deciding, her judgments are broader, deeper, clearer and more enduring. It is not easy to reconcile human feeling to the shedding of blood for any purpose, unless indeed in the excitement which the shedding of blood itself occasions. The knife is to feeling always an offence. Even when in the hands of a skillful surgeon, it refuses consent to the operation long after reason has demonstrated its necessity. It even pleads the cause of the known murderer on the day of his execution, and calls society half criminal when, in cold blood, it takes life as a protection of itself from crime. Let no word be said against this holy feeling; more than to law and government are we indebted to this tender sentiment of regard for human life for the safety with which we walk the streets by day and sleep secure in our beds at night. It is nature’s grand police, vigilant and faithful, sentineled in the soul, guarding against violence to peace and life. But whilst so much is freely accorded to feeling in the economy of human welfare, something more than feeling is necessary to grapple with a fact so grim and significant as was this raid. Viewed apart and alone, as a transaction separate and distinct from its antecedents and bearings, it takes rank with the most cold-blooded and atrocious wrongs ever perpetrated; but just here is the trouble — this raid on Harpers Ferry, no more than Sherman’s march to the sea can consent to be thus viewed alone.

There is, in the world’s government, a force which has in all ages been recognized, sometimes as Nemesis, sometimes as the judgment of God and sometimes as retributive justice; but under whatever name, all history attests the wisdom and beneficence of its chastisements, and men become reconciled to the agents through whom it operates, and have extolled them as heroes, benefactors and demigods.

To the broad vision of a true philosophy, nothing in this world stands alone. Everything is a necessary part of everything else. The margin of chance is narrowed by every extension of reason and knowledge, and nothing comes unbidden to the feast of human experience. The universe, of which we are a part, is continually proving itself a stupendous whole, a system of law and order, eternal and perfect. Every seed bears fruit after its kind, and nothing is reaped which was not sowed. The distance between seed time and harvest, in the moral world, may not be quite so well defined or as clearly intelligible as in the physical, but there is a seed time, and there is a harvest time, and though ages may intervene, and neither he who ploughed nor he who sowed may reap in person, yet the harvest nevertheless will surely come; and as in the physical world there are century plants, so it may be in the moral world, and their fruitage is as certain in the one as in the other. The bloody harvest of Harpers Ferry was ripened by the heat and moisture of merciless bondage of more than two hundred years. That startling cry of alarm on the bank of the Potomac was but the answering back of the avenging angel to



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the midnight invasions of Christian slave-traders on the sleeping hamlets of Africa. The history of the African slave-trade furnishes many illustrations far more cruel and bloody.

Viewed thus broadly our subject is worthy of thoughtful and dispassionate consideration. It invites the study of the poet, scholar, philosopher and statesman. What the masters in natural science have done for man in the physical world, the masters of social science may yet do for him in the moral world. Science now tells us when storms are in the sky, and when and where their violence will be most felt. Why may we not yet know with equal certainty when storms are in the moral sky, and how to avoid their desolating force? But I can invite you to no such profound discussions. I am not the man, nor is this the occasion for such philosophical enquiry.

Mine is the word of grateful memory to an old friend; to tell you what I knew of him –what I knew of his inner life –of what he did and what he attempted, and thus if possible to make the mainspring of his actions manifest and thereby give you a clearer view of his character and services.

It is said that next in value to the performance of great deeds ourselves, is the capacity to appreciate such when performed by others; to more than this I do not presume. Allow me one other personal word before I proceed. In the minds of some of the American people I was myself credited with an important agency in the John Brown raid. Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) was manifestly of that opinion. He was at the pains of having Mr. Buchanan send his Marshals to Rochester to invite me to accompany them to Virginia. Fortunately I left town several hours previous to their arrival.

What ground there was for this distinguished consideration shall duly appear in the natural course of this lecture. I wish however to say just here that there was no foundation whatever for the charge that I in any wise urged or instigated John Brown to his dangerous work. I rejoice that it is my good fortune to have seen, not only the end of slavery, but to see the day when the whole truth can be told about this matter without prejudice to either the living or the dead. I shall however allow myself little prominence in these disclosures. Your interests, like mine, are in the all-commanding figure of the story, and to him I consecrate the hour.

His zeal in the cause of my race was far greater than mine –it was as the burning sun to my taper light– mine was bounded by time, his stretched away to the boundless shores of eternity. I could live for the slave, but he could die for him. The crown of martyrdom is high, far beyond the reach of ordinary mortals, and yet happily no special greatness or superior moral excellence is necessary to discern and in some measure appreciate a truly great soul. Cold, calculating and unspiritual as most of us are, we are not wholly insensible to real greatness; and when we are brought in contact with a man of commanding mold, towering high and alone above the millions, free from all conventional fetters, true to his own moral convictions, a “law unto himself,” ready to suffer misconstruction, ignoring torture and death for what he believes to be right, we are compelled to do him homage.

In the stately shadow, in the sublime presence of such a soul I find myself standing to-night; and how to do it reverence, how to do it justice, how to honor the dead with due regard to the living, has been a matter of anxious solicitude.

Much has been said of John Brown, much that is wise and beautiful, but in looking over what may be called the John Brown literature, I have been little assisted with material, and even less encouraged with any hope of success in treating the subject. Scholarship, genius and devotion have hastened with poetry and eloquence, story and song to this simple altar of human virtue, and have retired dissatisfied and distressed with the thinness and poverty of their offerings, as I shall with mine.

The difficulty in doing justice to the life and character of such a man is not altogether due to the quality of the zeal, or of the ability brought to the work, nor yet to any imperfections in the qualities of the man himself; the state of the moral atmosphere about us has much to do with it. The fault is not in our eyes, nor yet in the object, if under a a murky sky we fail to discover the object. Wonderfully tenacious is the taint of a great wrong.


The evil, as well as “the good that men do, lives after them.” Slavery is indeed gone; but its long, black shadow yet falls broad and large over the face of the whole country. It is the old truth oft repeated, and never more fitly than now, “a prophet is without honor in his own country and among his own people.” Though more than



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twenty years have rolled between us and the [Harpers Ferry](#) raid, though since then the armies of the nation have found it necessary to do on a large scale what John Brown attempted to do on small one, and the great captain who fought his way through slavery has filled with honor the Presidential chair, we yet stand too near the days of slavery, and the life and times of John Brown, to see clearly the true martyr and hero that he was and rightly to estimate the value of the man and his works. Like the great and good of all ages –the men born in advance of their times, the men whose bleeding footprints attest the immense cost of reform, and show us the long and dreary spaces, between the luminous points in the progress of mankind,– this our noblest American hero must wait the polishing wheels of after-coming centuries to make his glory more manifest, and his worth more generally acknowledged. Such instances are abundant and familiar. If we go back four and twenty centuries, to the stately city of Athens, and search among her architectural splendor and her miracles of art for the Socrates of today, and as he stands in history, we shall find ourselves perplexed and disappointed. In Jerusalem Jesus himself was only the “carpenter’s son” –a young man wonderfully destitute of worldly prudence –pestilent fellow, “inexcusably and perpetually interfering in the world’s business,” –“upsetting the tables of the money-changers” –preaching sedition, opposing the good old religion –“making himself greater than Abraham,” and at the same time “keeping company” with very low people; but behold the change! He was a great miracle-worker, in his day, but time has worked for him a greater miracle than all his miracles, for now his name stands for all that is desirable in government, noble in life, orderly and beautiful in society. That which time has done for other great men of his class, that will time certainly do for John Brown. The brightest gems shine at first with subdued light, and the strongest characters are subject to the same limitations. Under the influence of adverse education and hereditary bias, few things are more difficult than to render impartial justice. Men hold up their hands to Heaven, and swear they will do justice, but what oaths against prejudice and against inclination! In the face of high-sounding professions and affirmations we know well how hard it is for a Turk to do justice to a Christian, or for a Christian to do justice to a Jew. How hard for an Englishman to do justice to an Irishman, for an Irishman to do justice to an Englishman, harder still for an American tainted by slavery to do justice to the Negro or the Negro’s friends. “John Brown,” said the late Wm. H. Seward, “was justly hanged.” “John Brown,” said the late John A. Andrew, “was right.” It is easy to perceive the sources of these two opposite judgments: the one was the verdict of slave-holding and panic-stricken Virginia, the other was the verdict of the best heart and brain of free old Massachusetts. One was the heated judgment of the passing and passionate hour, and the other was the calm, clear, unimpeachable judgment of the broad, illimitable future.

There is, however, one aspect of the present subject quite worthy of notice, for it makes the hero of [Harpers Ferry](#) in some degree an exception to the general rules to which I have just now adverted. Despite the hold which slavery had at time on the country, despite the popular prejudice against the Negro, despite the shock which the first alarm occasioned, almost from the first John Brown received a large measure of sympathy and appreciation. New England recognized in him the spirit which brought the pilgrims to Plymouth rock and hailed him as a martyr and saint. True he had broken the law, true he had struck for a despised people, true he had crept upon his foe stealthily, like a wolf upon the fold, and had dealt his blow in the dark whilst his enemy slept, but with all this and more to disturb the moral sense, men discerned in him the greatest and best qualities known to human nature, and pronounced him “good.” Many consented to his death, and then went home and taught their children to sing his praise as one whose “soul is marching on” through the realms of endless bliss. One element in explanation of this somewhat anomalous circumstance will probably be found in the troubled times which immediately succeeded, for “when judgments are abroad in the world, men learn righteousness.” The country had before this learned the value of Brown’s heroic character. He had shown boundless courage and skill in dealing with the enemies of liberty in [Kansas](#). With men so few, and means so small, and odds against him so great, no captain ever surpassed him in achievements, some of which seem almost beyond belief. With only eight men in that bitter war, he met, fought and captured Henry Clay Pate, with twenty-five well armed and mounted men.  In this memorable encounter, he selected his ground so wisely, handled



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his men so skillfully, and attacked the enemy so vigorously, that they could neither run nor fight, and were therefore compelled to surrender to a force less than one-third their own. With just thirty men on another important occasion during the same border war, he met and vanquished four hundred Missourians under the command of Gen. Read. These men had come into the territory under an oath never to return to their homes till they had stamped out the last vestige of free State spirit in [Kansas](#); but a brush with old Brown took this high conceit out of them, and they were glad to get off upon any terms, without stopping to stipulate.  With less than one hundred men to defend the town of Lawrence, he offered to lead them and give battle to fourteen hundred men on the banks of the Waukerusia river, and was much vexed when his offer was refused by Gen. Jim Lane and others to whom the defense of the town was confided.  Before leaving [Kansas](#), he went into the border of Missouri, and liberated a dozen slaves in a single night, and, in spite of slave laws and marshals, he brought these people through a half dozen States, and landed them safely in Canada. With eighteen men this man shook the whole social fabric of Virginia. With eighteen men he overpowered a town of nearly three thousand souls. With these eighteen men he held that large community firmly in his grasp for thirty long hours. With these eighteen men he rallied in a single night fifty slaves to his standard, and made prisoners of an equal number of the slave-holding class. With these eighteen men he defied the power and bravery of a dozen of the best militia companies that Virginia could send against him. Now, when slavery struck, as it certainly did strike, at the life of the country, it was not the fault of John Brown that our rulers did not at first know how to deal with it. He had already shown us the weak side of the rebellion, had shown us where to strike and how. It was not from lack of native courage that Virginia submitted for thirty long hours and at last was relieved only by Federal troops; but because the attack was made on the side of her conscience and thus armed her against herself. She beheld at her side the sullen brow of a black Ireland. When John Brown proclaimed [emancipation](#) to the slaves of [Maryland](#) and Virginia he added to his war power the force of a moral earthquake. Virginia felt all her strong-ribbed mountains to shake under the heavy tread of armed insurgents. Of his army of nineteen her conscience made an army of nineteen hundred.

Another feature of the times, worthy of notice, was the effect of this blow upon the country at large. At the first moment we were stunned and bewildered. Slavery had so benumbed the moral sense of the nation, that it never suspected the possibility of an explosion like this, and it was difficult for Captain Brown to get himself taken for what he really was. Few could seem to comprehend that freedom to the slaves was his only object. If you will go back with me to that time you will find that the most curious and contradictory versions of the affair were industriously circulated, and those which were the least rational and true seemed to command the readiest belief. In the view of some, it assumed tremendous proportions. To such it was nothing less than a wide-sweeping rebellion to overthrow the existing government, and construct another upon its ruins, with Brown for its President and Commander-in-Chief; the proof of this was found in the old man's carpet-bag in the shape of a constitution for a new Republic, an instrument which in reality had been executed to govern the conduct of his men in the mountains. Smaller and meaner natures saw in it nothing higher than a purpose to plunder. To them John Brown and his men were a gang of desperate robbers, who had learned by some means that government had sent a large sum of money to [Harpers Ferry](#) to pay off the workmen in its employ there, and they had gone thence to fill their pockets from this money. The fact is, that outside of a few friends, scattered in different parts of the country, and the slave-holders of Virginia, few persons understood the significance of the hour. That a man might do something very audacious and desperate for money, power or fame, was to the general apprehension quite possible; but, in face of plainly-written law, in face of constitutional guarantees protecting each State against domestic violence, in face of a nation of forty million of people, that nineteen men could invade a great State to liberate a despised and hated race, was to the average intellect and conscience, too monstrous for belief. In this respect the vision of Virginia was clearer than that of the nation. Conscious of her guilt and therefore full of suspicion, sleeping on pistols for pillows, startled at every unusual sound, constantly fearing and expecting a repetition of the Nat. Turner insurrection, she at once understood the meaning, if not the magnitude of the affair. It was this understanding which caused her to raise the lusty and



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implored a cry to the Federal government for help, and it was not till he who struck the blow had fully explained his motives and object, that the incredulous nation in any wise comprehended the true spirit of the raid, or of its commander. Fortunate for his memory, fortunate for the brave men associated with him, fortunate for the truth of history, John Brown survived the saber gashes, bayonet wounds and bullet holes, and was able, though covered with blood, to tell his own story and make his own defense. Had he with all his men, as might have been the case, gone down in the shock of battle, the world would have had no true basis for its judgment, and one of the most heroic efforts ever witnessed in behalf of liberty would have been confounded with base and selfish purposes. When, like savages, the Wises, the Vallandinghames, the Washingtons, the Stuarts and others stood around the fallen and bleeding hero, and sought by torturing questions to wring from his supposed dying lips some word by which to soil the sublime undertaking, by implicating [Gerrit Smith](#), [Joshua Reed Giddings](#), [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#), [George Luther Stearns](#), [Edwin Morton](#), [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), and other prominent Anti-slavery men, the brave old man, not only avowed his object to be the [emancipation](#) of the slaves, but serenely and proudly announced himself as solely responsible for all that had happened. Though some thought of his own life might at such a moment have seemed natural and excusable, he showed none, and scornfully rejected the idea that he acted as the agent or instrument of any man or set of men. He admitted that he had friends and sympathizers, but to his own head he invited all the bolts of slave-holding wrath and fury, and welcomed them to do their worst. His manly courage and self-forgetful nobleness were not lost upon the crowd about him, nor upon the country. They drew applause from his bitterest enemies. Said [Henry A. Wise](#), "He is the gamest man I ever met." "He was kind and humane to his prisoners," said Col. Lewis Washington.

To the outward eye of men, John Brown was a criminal, but to their inward eye he was a just man and true. His deeds might be disowned, but the spirit which made those deeds possible was worthy highest honor. It has been often asked, why did not Virginia spare the life of this man? why did she not avail herself of this grand opportunity to add to her other glory that of a lofty magnanimity? Had they spared the good old man's life — had they said to him, "you see we have you in our power, and could easily take your life, but we have no desire to hurt you in any way; you have committed a terrible crime against society; you have invaded us at midnight and attacked a sleeping community, but we recognize you as a fanatic, and in some sense instigated by others; and on this ground and others, we release you. Go about your business, and tell those who sent you that we can afford to be magnanimous to our enemies." I say, had Virginia held some such language as this to John Brown, she would have inflicted a heavy blow on the whole Northern abolition movement, one which only the omnipotence of truth and the force of truth could have overcome. I have no doubt Gov. Wise would have done so gladly, but, alas, he was the executive of a State which thought she could not afford such magnanimity. She had that within her bosom which could more safely tolerate the presence of a criminal than a saint, a highway robber than a moral hero. All her hills and valleys were studded with material for a disastrous conflagration, and one spark of the dauntless spirit of Brown might set the whole State in flames. A sense of this appalling liability put an end to every noble consideration. His death was a foregone conclusion, and his trial was simply one of form.

Honor to the brave young Col. Hoyt who hastened from Massachusetts to defend his friend's life at the peril of his own; but there would have been no hope of success had he been allowed to plead the case. He might have surpassed Choate or Webster in power — a thousand physicians might have sworn that Capt. Brown was insane, it would have been all to no purpose; neither eloquence nor testimony could have prevailed.

Slavery was the idol of Virginia, and pardon and life to Brown meant condemnation and death to slavery. He had practically illustrated a truth stranger than fiction, — a truth higher than Virginia had ever known, — a truth more noble and beautiful than Jefferson ever wrote. He had evinced a conception of the sacredness and value of liberty which transcended in sublimity that of her own [Patrick Henry](#) and made even his fire-flashing sentiment of "Liberty or Death" seem dark and tame and selfish. Henry loved liberty for himself, but this man loved liberty for all men, and for those most despised and scorned, as well as for those most esteemed and



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honored. Just here was the true glory of John Brown's mission. It was not for his own freedom that he was thus ready to lay down his life, for with Paul he could say, "I was born free." No chain had bound his ankle,



no yoke had galled his neck. History has no better illustration of pure, disinterested benevolence. It was not Caucasian for Caucasian —white man for white man; not rich man for rich man, but Caucasian for Ethiopian —white man for black man —rich man for poor man —the man admitted and respected, for the man despised and rejected. "I want you to understand, gentlemen," he said to his persecutors, "that I respect the rights of the poorest and weakest of the colored people, oppressed by the slave system, as I do those of the most wealthy and powerful." In this we have the key to the whole life and career of the man. Than in this sentiment humanity has nothing more touching, reason nothing more noble, imagination nothing more sublime; and if we could reduce all the religions of the world to one essence we could find in it nothing more divine. It is much to be regretted that some great artist, in sympathy with the spirit of the occasion, had not been present when these and similar words were spoken. The situation was thrilling. An old man in the center of an excited and angry crowd, far away from home, in an enemy's country —with no friend near —overpowered, defeated, wounded, bleeding —covered with reproaches —his brave companions nearly all dead —his two faithful sons stark and cold by his side —reading his death-warrant in his fast —oozing blood and increasing weakness as in the faces of all around him —yet calm, collected, brave, with a heart for any fate —using his supposed dying moments to explain his course and vindicate his cause: such a subject would have been at once an inspiration and a power for one of the grandest historical pictures ever painted....

With John Brown, as with every other man fit to die for a cause, the hour of his physical weakness was the hour of his moral strength —the hour of his defeat was the hour of his triumph —the moment of his capture was the crowning victory of his life. With the Allegheny mountains for his pulpit, the country for his church and the whole civilized world for his audience, he was a thousand times more effective as a preacher than as a warrior, and the consciousness of this fact was the secret of his amazing complacency. Might with the sword of steel, he was mightier with the sword of the truth, and with this sword he literally swept the horizon. He was more than a match for all the Wises, Masons, Vallandinghams and Washingtons, who could rise against him. They could kill him, but they could not answer him.

In studying the character and works of a great man, it is always desirable to learn in what he is distinguished from others, and what have been the causes of this difference. Such men as he whom we are now considering, come on to the theater of life only at long intervals. It is not always easy to explain the exact and logical causes that produce them, or the subtle influences which sustain them, at the immense heights where we sometimes find them; but we know that the hour and the man are seldom far apart, and that here, as elsewhere, the demand may in some mysterious way, regulate the supply. A great iniquity, hoary with age, proud and defiant, tainting the whole moral atmosphere of the country, subjecting both church and state to its control, demanded the startling shock which John Brown seemed especially inspired to give it.

Apart from this mission there was nothing very remarkable about him. He was a wool-dealer, and a good judge of wool, as a wool-dealer ought to be. In all visible respects he was a man like unto other men. No outward sign of [Kansas](#) or [Harpers Ferry](#) was about him. As I knew him, he was an even-tempered man, neither morose, malicious nor misanthropic, but kind, amiable, courteous, and gentle in his intercourse with men. His words were few, well chosen and forcible. He was a good business man, and a good husband and father: a man




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

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apparently in every way calculated to make a smooth and pleasant path for himself through the world. He loved society, he loved little children, he liked music, and was fond of animals. To no one was the world more beautiful or life more sweet. How then as I have said shall we explain his apparent indifference to life? I can find but one answer, and that is, his intense hatred to oppression. I have talked with many men, but I remember none, who seemed so deeply excited upon the subject of slavery as he. He would walk the room in agitation at mention of the word. He saw the evil through no mist or haze, but in a light of infinite brightness, which left no line of its ten thousand horrors out of sight. Law, religion, learning, were interposed in its behalf in vain. His law in regard to it was that which Lord Henry Peter Brougham described, as “the law above all the enactments of human codes, the same in all time, the same throughout the world — the law unchangeable and eternal—the law written by the finger of God on the human heart—that law by which property in man is, and ever must remain, a wild and guilty phantasy.”

Against truth and right, legislative enactments were to his mind mere cobwebs —the pompous emptiness of human pride —the pitiful outbreathings of human nothingness. He used to say “whenever there is a right thing to be done, there is a ‘thus said the Lord’ that it shall be done.”

It must be admitted that Brown assumed tremendous responsibility in making war upon the peaceful people of Harpers Ferry, but it must be remembered also that in his eye a slave-holding community could not be peaceable, but was, in the nature of the case, in one incessant state of war. To him such a community was not more sacred than a band of robbers: it was the right of any one to assault it by day or night. He saw no hope that slavery would ever be abolished by moral or political means: “he knew,” he said, “the proud and hard hearts of the slave-holders, and that they never would consent to give up their slaves, till they felt a big stick about their heads.”

It was five years before this event at Harpers Ferry, while the conflict between freedom and slavery was waxing hotter and hotter with every hour, that the blundering statesmanship of the National Government repealed the Missouri compromise,  and thus launched the territory of [Kansas](#) as a prize to be battled for between the North and South. The remarkable part taken in this contest by Brown has been already referred to, and it doubtless helped to prepare him for the final tragedy, and though it did not by means originate the plan, it confirmed him in it and hastened its execution.

During his four years’ service in [Kansas](#) it was my good fortune to see him often. On his trips to and from the territory he sometimes stopped several days at my house, and at one time several weeks. It was on this last occasion that liberty had been victorious in [Kansas](#), and he felt that he must hereafter devote himself to what he considered his larger work. It was the theme of all his conversation, filling his nights with dreams and his days with visions. An incident of his boyhood may explain, in some measure, the intense abhorrence he felt to slavery. He had for some reason been sent into the States of [Kentucky](#), where he made the acquaintance of a slave boy, about his own age, of whom he became very fond. For some petty offense this boy was one day subjected to a brutal beating. The blows were dealt with an iron shovel and fell fast and furiously upon his slender body. Born in a free State and unaccustomed to such revolted at the shocking spectacle and at that early age he swore eternal hatred to slavery.  After years never obliterated the impression, and he found in this early experience an argument against contempt for small things. It is true that the boy is the father of the man. From the acorn comes the oak. The impression of a horse’s foot in the sand suggested the art of printing. The fall of an apple intimated the law of gravitation. A word dropped in the woods of Vincennes, by royal hunters, gave Europe and the world a “William the Silent,” and a thirty years’ war. The beating of a Hebrew bondsman, by an Egyptian, created a Moses, and the infliction of a similar outrage on a helpless slave boy in our own land may have caused, forty years afterwards, a John Brown and Harpers Ferry Raid. Most of us can remember some event or incident which has at some time come to us, and made itself a permanent part of our lives. Such an incident came to me in the year 1847.  I had then the honor of spending a day and night under the roof of a man, whose character and conversation made a very deep impression on my mind and heart; and as the circumstance does not lie entirely out of our present observations, you will pardon for a moment a



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seeming digression. The name of the person alluded to had been several times mentioned to me, in a tone that made me curious to see him and to make his acquaintance. He was a merchant, and our first meeting was at his store — a substantial brick building, giving evidence of a flourishing business. After a few minutes' detention here, long enough for me to observe the neatness and order of the places, I was conducted by him to his residence where I was kindly received by his family as an expected guest. I was a little disappointed at the appearance of this man's house, for after seeing his fine store, I was prepared to see a fine residence; but this logic was entirely contradicted by the facts. The house was a small, wooden one, on a black street in a neighborhood of laboring men and mechanics, respectable enough, but not just the spot where one would expect enough, but not just the spot where one would expect to find the home of a successful merchant. Plain as was the outside, the inside was plainer. Its furniture might have pleased a Spartan. It would take longer to tell what was not in it, than what was; no sofas, no cushions, no curtains, no carpets, no easy rocking chairs inviting to enervation of rest or repose. My first meal passed under the misnomer of tea. It was none of your tea and toast sort, but potatoes and cabbage, and beef soup; such a meal as a man might relish after following the plough all day, or after performing a forced march of a dozen miles over rough ground in frosty weather. Innocent of paint, veneering, varnish or tablecloth, the table announced itself unmistakably and honestly pine and of the plainest workmanship. No hired help passed from kitchen to dining room, staring in amazement at the colored man at the white man's table. The mother, daughters and sons did the serving, and did it well. I heard no apology for doing their own work; they went through it as if used to it, untouched by any thought of degradation or impropriety. Supper over, the boys helped to clear the table and wash the dishes. This style of housekeeping struck me as a little odd. I mention it because household management is worthy of thought. A house is more than brick and mortar, wood or paint; this to me at least was. In its plainness it was a truthful reflection of its inmates: no disguises, no illusions, no make-believe here, but stern truth and solid, purpose breathed in all its arrangements. I was not long in company with the master of this house before I discovered that he was indeed the master of it, and likely to become mine too, if I staid long with him. He fulfilled St. Paul's idea of the head of the family — his wives believe in him, and his children observed him with reverence. Whenever he spoke, his words commanded earnest attention. His arguments which I ventured at some points to oppose, seemed to convince all, his appeals touched all, and his will impressed all. Certainly I never felt myself in the presence of a stronger religious influence than while in this house. "God and duty, God and duty," run like a thread of gold through all his utterances, and his family supplied a ready "Amen." In person he was lean and sinewy, of the best New England mould, built for times of trouble, fitted to grapple with the flintiest hardships. Clad in plain American woolen, shod in boots of cowhide leather, and wearing a cravat of the same substantial material, under six feet high, less than one hundred and fifty lbs. in weight, aged about fifty, he presented a figure straight and symmetrical as a mountain pine. His bearing was singularly impressive. His head was not large, but compact and high. His hair was coarse, strong, slightly gray and closely trimmed and grew close to his forehead. His face was smoothly shaved and revealed a strong square mouth, supported by a broad and prominent chin. His eyes were clear and grew, and in conversation they alternated with tears and fire. When on the street, he moved with a long springing, race-horse step, absorbed by his own reflections, neither seeking nor shunning observation. Such was the man whose name I heard uttered in whispers — such was the house in which he lived — such were family and household management — and such was Captain John Brown.

He said to me at this meeting, that he had invited me to his house for the especial purpose of laying before me his plan for the speedy [emancipation](#) of my race. He seemed to apprehend opposition on my part as he opened the subject and touched my vanity by saying, that he had observed my course at home and abroad, and wanted my co-operation. He said he had been for the last thirty years looking for colored men to whom he could safely reveal his secret, and had almost despaired, at times, of finding such, but that now he was encouraged for he saw heads rising up in all directions, to whom he thought he could with safety impart his plan. As this plan then lay in his mind it was very simple, and had much to commend it. It did not, as was supposed by many,





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contemplate a general rising among the slaves, and a general slaughter of the slave masters (an insurrection he thought would only defeat the object), but it did contemplate the creating of an armed force which should act in the very heart of the South. He was not averse to the shedding of blood, and thought the practice of carrying arms would be a good one for the colored people to adopt, as it would give them a sense of manhood.

No people he said could have self-respect or be respected who would not fight for their freedom. He called my attention to a large map of the U. States, and pointed out to me the far-reaching Alleghanies, stretching away from the borders of New York into the Southern States. "These mountains," he said, "are the basis of my plan. God has given the strength of these hills to freedom; they were placed here to aid the [emancipation](#) of your race; they are full of natural forts, where one man for defense would be equal to a hundred for attack; they are also full of good hiding places where a large number of men could be concealed and baffle and elude pursuit for a long time. I know these mountains well and could take a body of men into them and keep them there in spite of all the efforts of Virginia to dislodge me, and drive me out. I would take at first about twenty-five picked men and begin on a small scale, supply them arms and ammunition, post them in squads of fives on a line of gathering recruits from the surrounding farms, seeking and selecting the most restless and daring."

He saw that in this part of the work the utmost care must be used to guard against treachery and disclosure; only the most conscientious and skillful should be sent on this perilous duty. With care and enterprise he thought he could soon gather a force of one hundred hardy men, men who would be content to lead the free and adventurous life to which he proposed to train them. When once properly drilled and each had found the place for which he was best suited, they would begin work in earnest; they would run off the slaves in large numbers, retain the strong and brave ones in the mountains, and send the weak and timid ones to the North by the underground Rail-road; his operations would be enlarged with increasing numbers and would not be confined to one locality. Slave-holders should in some cases be approached at midnight and told to give up their slaves and to let them have their best horses to ride away upon. Slavery was a state of war, he said, to which the slaves were unwilling parties and consequently they had a right to anything necessary to their peace and freedom. He would shed no blood and would avoid a fight except in self-defense, when he would of course do his best. He believed this movement would weaken slavery in two ways—first by making slave property insecure, it would become undesirable; and secondly it would keep the anti-slavery agitation alive and public attention fixed upon it, and thus lead to the adoption of measures to abolish the evil altogether. He held that there was need of something startling to prevent the agitation of the question from dying out; that slavery had come near being abolished in Virginia by the Nat. Turner insurrection, and he thought his method would speedily put an end to it, both in [Maryland](#) and Virginia. The trouble was to get the right men to start with and money enough to equip them. He had adopted the simple and economical mode of living to which I have referred with a view to save money for this purpose. This was said in no boastful tone, for he felt that he had delayed already too long and had no room to boast either his zeal or his self-denial.


From 8 o'clock in the evening till 3 in the morning, Capt. Brown and I sat face to face, he arguing in favor of his plan, and I finding all the objections I could against it. Now mark! this meeting of ours was full twelve years before the strike at [Harpers Ferry](#). He had been watching and waiting all that time for suitable heads to rise or "pop up" as he said among the sable millions in whom he could confide; hence forty years had passed between his thought and his act. Forty years, though not a long time in the life of a nation, is a long time in the life of a man; and here forty long years, this man was struggling with this one idea; like Moses he was forty years in the wilderness. Youth, manhood, middle age had come and gone; two marriages had been consummated, twenty children had called him father; and through all the storms and vicissitudes of busy life, this one thought, like the angel in the burning bush, had confronted him with its blazing light, bidding him on to his work. Like Moses he had made excuses, and as with Moses his excuses were overruled. Nothing should postpone further what was to him his only apology for existence. He often said to me, though life was sweet to him, he would willingly lay it down for the freedom of my people; and on one occasion he added, that he had already lived about as long as most men, since he had slept less, and if he should now lay down his life

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the loss would not be great, for in fact he knew no better use for it. During his last visit to us in Rochester there appeared in the newspapers a touching story connected with the horrors of the Sepoy War in British India.

 A Scotch missionary and his family were in the hands of the enemy, and were to be massacred the next morning. During the night, when they had given up every hope of rescue, suddenly the wife insisted that relief would come. Placing her ear close to the ground she declared she heard the Slogan — the Scotch war song. For long hours in the night no member of the family could hear the advancing music but herself. “Dinna ye hear it? Dinna ye hear it?” she would say, but they could not hear it. As the morning slowly dawned a Scotch regiment was found encamped indeed about them, and they were saved from the threatened slaughter.




This circumstance, coming at such a time, gave Capt. Brown a new word of cheer. He would come to the table in the morning his countenance fairly illuminated, saying that he had heard the Slogan, and he would add, “Dinna ye hear it? Dinna ye hear it?” Alas! like the Scotch missionary I was obliged to say “No.” Two weeks prior to the mediated attack, Capt. Brown summoned me to meet him in an old stone quarry on the



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Conecochequi river, near the town of Chambersburgh, Penn.  His arms and ammunition were stored in that town and were to be moved on to [Harpers Ferry](#). In company with [Shields Green](#) I obeyed the summons, and prompt to the hour we met the dear old man, with [John Henry Kagi](#), his secretary, at the appointed place. Our meeting was in some sense a council of war. We spent the Saturday and succeeding Sunday in conference on the question, whether the desperate step should then taken, or the old plan as already described should be carried out. He was for boldly striking Harpers Ferry at once and running the risk of getting into the mountains afterwards. I was for avoiding Harpers Ferry altogether. Shields Green and Mr. Kagi remained silent listeners throughout. It is needless to repeat here what was said, after what has happened. Suffice it, that after all I could say, I saw that my old friend had resolved on his course and that it was idle to parley. I told him finally that it was impossible for me to join him. I could see Harpers Ferry only as a trap of steel, and ourselves in the wrong side of it. He regretted my decision and we parted.

Thus far, I have spoken exclusively of Capt. Brown. Let me say a word or two of his brave and devoted men, and first of Shields Green. He was a fugitive slave from Charleston, South Carolina, and had attested his love of liberty by escaping from slavery and making his way through many dangers to Rochester, where he had lived in my family, and where he met the man with whom he went to the scaffold. I said to him, as I was about to leave, "Now Shields, you have heard our discussion. If in view of it, you do not wish to stay, you have but to say so, and you can go back with me." He answered, "I b'l'ëve I'll go wid de old man;" and go with him he did, into the fight, and to the gallows, and bore himself as grandly as any of the number. At the moment when Capt. Brown was surrounded, and all chance of escape was cut off, Green was in the mountains and could have made his escape as [Osborn Perry Anderson](#) did, but when asked to do so, he made the same answer he did at Chambersburg, "I b'l'ëve I'll go down wid de ole man." When in prison at Charlestown, and he was not allowed to see his old friend, his fidelity to him was in no wise weakened, and no complaint against Brown could be extorted from him by those who talked with him.

If a monument should be erected to the memory of John Brown, as there ought to be, the form and name of Shields Green should have a conspicuous place upon it. It is a remarkable fact, that in this small company of men. but one showed any sign of weakness or regret for what he did or attempted to do. Poor [John Edwin Cook](#) broke down and sought to save his life by representing that he had been deceived, and allured by false promises. But [Aaron D. Stevens](#), [Albert Hazlett](#) and Green went to their doom like the heroes they were, without a murmur, without a regret, believing alike in their captain and their cause.

For the disastrous termination of this invasion, several causes have been assigned. It has been said that Capt. Brown found it necessary to strike before he was ready; that men had promised to join him from the North who failed to arrive; that the cowardly negroes did not rally to his support as he expected, but the true cause as stated by himself, contradicts all these theories, and from his statement there is no appeal. Among the questions put to him by Mr. Vallandigham after his capture were the following: "Did you expect a general uprising of the slaves in case of your success?" To this he answered, "No, sir, nor did I wish it. I expected to gather strength from time to time and then to set them free." "Did you expect to hold possession here until then?" Answer, "Well, probably I had quite a different idea. I do not know as I ought to reveal my plans.

I am here wounded and a prisoner because I foolishly permitted myself to be so. You overstate your strength when you suppose I could have been taken if I had not allowed it. I was too tardy after commencing the open attack in delaying my movements through Monday night and up to the time of the arrival of government troops. It was all because of my desire to spare the feelings of my prisoners and their families."

But the question is, Did John Brown fail? He certainly did fail to get out of [Harpers Ferry](#) before being beaten down by United States soldiers; he did fail to save his own life, and to lead a liberating army into the mountains of Virginia. But he did not go to Harpers Ferry to save his life. The true question is, Did John Brown draw his sword against slavery and thereby lose his life in vain? and to this I answer ten thousand times, No! No man fails, or can fail who so grandly gives himself and all he has to a righteous cause. No man, who in his hour of extremest need, when on his way to meet an ignominious death, could so forget himself as to stop and kiss a

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little child, one of the hated race for whom he was about to die, could by any possibility fail. Did John Brown fail? Ask [Henry A. Wise](#) in whose house less than two years after, a school for the emancipated slaves was taught. Did John Brown fail? Ask [James M. Mason](#), the author of the inhuman fugitive slave bill, who was cooped up in Fort Warren, as a traitor less than two years from the time that he stood over the prostrate body of John Brown. Did John Brown fail? Ask Clement C. Vallandigham, one other of the inquisitorial party; for he too went down in the tremendous whirlpool created by the powerful hand of this bold invader. If John Brown did not end the war that ended slavery, he did at least begin the war that ended slavery. If we look over the dates, places and men, for which this honor is claimed, we shall find that not Carolina, but Virginia—not Fort Sumter, but Harpers Ferry and the arsenal—not Col. Anderson, but John Brown, began the war that ended American slavery and made this a free Republic. Until this blow was struck, the prospect for freedom was dim, shadowy and uncertain. The irrepressible conflict was one of words, votes and compromises. When John Brown stretched forth his arm the sky was cleared. The time for compromises was gone—the armed hosts of freedom stood face to face over the chasm of a broken Union—and the clash of arms was at hand. The South staked all upon getting possession of the Federal Government, and failing to do that, drew the sword of rebellion and thus made her own, and not Brown's, the lost cause of the century.





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Winter: [Robert Louis Stevenson](#)'s "Thrawn Janet" appeared in [Cornhill Magazine](#).

[Mary Ann Day Brown](#) moved from Rohnerville to Saratoga, [California](#). She would contract cancer and would die in the Bay Area on February 20, 1884.





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1883

July: [Antonio Maceo](#) resigned his posts in Honduras and declared,



Our enslaved [Cuba](#) demands that its sons fight for its freedom.

[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#)'s "Comment by a radical Abolitionist" appeared in the [Century Magazine](#), commenting upon the article immediately preceding it, by Alexander R. Boteler, entitled "Recollections of the John Brown Raid by a Virginian Who Witnessed the Fight" (Volume 26, pages 411-15, 399-411):

It is hard -nay, impossible- to carry the reader of these pages in 1883 back in memory to that period of our country's history when [John Brown](#) captured the town and arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#), or make real to ourselves the despotism which a few slaveholders then exercised over the rest of mankind in this country. Though a meager minority in their own South, they absolutely controlled there not only four millions of slaves, but six millions of white people, nominally free, while they directed the policy and the opinions of more than half the free people of the non-slaveholding States. They had dictated the nomination and secured the election of James Buchanan as President, - the most complete servant of the slave power who ever held that office; they had not only refused to terminate the slave-trade (as by treaty we were bound to assist in doing), but they had induced the importation of a few cargoes of slaves into Carolina and Georgia; they had broken down the Missouri compromise of 1820 (imposed by themselves on the unwilling North), and had done their best to extend slavery over the new territories of the nation, and to legalize its existence in all the Free States. Through the mouth of Chief-Justice Roger Brooke Taney, who simply uttered the decrees of the slave-holding oligarchy, they had made the Supreme Court declare that four million Americans, of African descent, had practically "no rights which a white man was bound to respect"; and they exerted themselves in every way to give due effect to that dictum. The Dred Scott decision was given by Taney in 1857, and it led at once to the execution of John Brown's long-cherished purpose of striking a blow at slavery in its own Virginian stronghold. That decision flashed into the minds of Northern men the conviction which John Quincy Adams had long before formulated and expressed - that "the preservation, propagation, and perpetuation of slavery was the



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vital and animating spirit of the national Government." It was this conviction that led to the election of [Abraham Lincoln](#) in 1860, as it had led John Brown and his small band of followers to form their conspiracy and begin their campaign in 1858-'59. While the unpaid labor of the slaves was believed by the slaveholders to be the real source of our national prosperity, it was the merit and the fate of John Brown first to see and act upon the sad knowledge that slavery and our national existence were incompatible. Thirty years before he died for the blacks in Virginia, he chose the side of the nation against slavery; and in less than ten years after his death the whole people followed in the path he had marked out – the straight and thorny road of emancipation by force.

It is in this broad way that the Harpers Ferry raid must be looked at, – not as a midnight foray of robbers and murderers. It was an act of war, and was accepted by the South as a sure omen that war was at hand. Brown told the slave-holders this in his famous conversation with [James Mason](#) of Virginia and Vallandigham of Ohio. "I claim to be here," he said, "carrying out a measure I believe to be perfectly justifiable, and not to be acting the part of an incendiary or ruffian; on the contrary, I am here to aid those suffering under a great wrong. I wish to say, furthermore, that you had better –all you people of the South– prepare yourselves for a settlement of this question. It must come up for settlement sooner than you are prepared for it, and the sooner you commence that preparation the better for you. You may dispose of me very easily. I am nearly disposed of now. But this question is still to be settled; this negro question, I mean. The end of that is not yet." This was a veritable "Thus saith the Lord" – as his hearers and the whole world soon found out. But to such as then doubted the message of the prophet Brown condescended to verify his credentials in that wonderfully eloquent speech to the court that sentenced him to the gallows:

This court acknowledges, as I suppose, the validity of the Law of God. I see a book kissed here which I suppose to be the **BIBLE** or, at least, the New Testament. That teaches me, "that all things whatsoever I would that men should do unto me, I should do even so to them." It teaches me further, to "remember them that are in bonds as bound with them." I endeavored to act up to that instruction. I say I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done –as I have always freely admitted I have done– in behalf of His despised poor, was not wrong but right.

There was John Brown's authority for the capture of Harpers Ferry, – the same which Ethan Allen alleged, with less reason, a Ticonderoga, where he commanded surrender "in the name of the great Jehovah." Brown "had gone to be a soldier in the army of the Lord" long before his death, and the song of the people marching to avenge that death were but the public proclamation



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of his commission from above. Since the details of that strange conversation with Mason of Virginia have faded from the popular memory, let me quote another passage in which Brown pursues the same line of reasoning he afterward held in court.

SENATOR MASON: How do you justify your acts?

CAPTAIN BROWN: I think, my friend, you are guilty of a great wrong against God and humanity -I say it without wishing to be offensive,- and it would be perfectly right for any one to interfere with you so far as to free those you willfully and wickedly hold in bondage. I do not say this insultingly.

SENATOR MASON: I understand that.

CAPTAIN BROWN: I think I did right, and that others will do right who interfere with you, at any time, and all times. I hold that the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you," applies to all who would help others to gain their liberty.

LIEUTENANT STUART: But you don't believe in the BIBLE?

CAPTAIN BROWN: Certainly I do.

\* \* \*

I want you to understand, gentlemen, that I respect the rights of the poorest and weakest of the colored people, oppressed by the slave system, just as much as I do those of the most wealthy and powerful. That is the idea that has moved me, and that alone. We expected no reward except the satisfaction of endeavoring to do for those in distress -the greatly oppressed- as we would be done by. The cry of distress of the oppressed is my reason, and the only thing that prompted me to come here.

Brown's plan of action in Virginia was wholly his own, as he more than once declared; and it was not until he had long formed and matured it that he made it known (so far as an attack on slavery in Virginia was concerned) to the few friends who shared his confidence in that matter. I cannot say how numerous these were; but beyond his own family and the armed followers who accompanied him, I have never supposed that his Virginia plan was known to fifty persons. Even to those few it was not fully communicated, though they knew that he meant to fortify himself somewhere in the mountains of Virginia or Tennessee, and from that fastness, with his band of soldiers, sally out and liberate slaves by force. His plan to this extent was known, early in 1858, by [Frederick Douglass](#), [Gerrit Smith](#) (at whose house and in whose presence I first heard Brown declare it), [Theodore Parker](#), [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#), [George Luther Stearns](#), [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#), and myself, and we all raised money to aid Brown in carrying this plan forward.

I know this, because some of the money and nearly all the correspondence relating to the contributions passed through my





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hands in 1858-9. I talked more than once in those years with all the persons above named, concerning Brown's Virginia plans and had letters from all except Douglass in regard to it. Brown's general purpose of attacking slavery by force, in Missouri or elsewhere, was known in 1857-8-9 to [Waldo Emerson](#), A. [Bronson Alcott](#), [Henry Thoreau](#), [Wendell Phillips](#), [Thomas Russell](#), [John Albion Andrew](#), and others of the anti-slavery men of Massachusetts, none of whom discountenanced it, while most of them, in my hearing, distinctly approved it, generally, however, as a last resort or a measure of retaliation for the outrages of the slave-holders and their allies. Had these gentlemen known of the Virginia plan, most of them would have strongly disapproved it as premature or impracticable. Such, also, it seemed at first, and generally afterward, to those of us who contributed money to aid Brown in it. I speak particularly of Gerrit Smith, Theodore Parker, George L. Stearns, Dr. Howe, Col. Higginson, and myself. But we all felt, as Governor Andrew afterward said, that whatever the old worthy might plan or do, "John Brown himself was right," and upon that feeling we acted, in spite of doubts and many misgivings. The end has justified our instinctive sentiment; and it has more than justified, it has glorified Brown. I do not wonder that Virginians cannot all see this yet; but the world sees it, and Brown has become, to the world in general, one of the immortal champions of liberty—historical or mythical—among whom we reckon Leonidas, Maccabeus, Tell, Winkelried, Wallace, Hofer, and Marco Bozzaris. I knew John Brown well. He was often a my house and at the houses of my friends and I traveled with him for days. He was what all his speeches, letters, and actions avouch him—a simple, brave, heroic person incapable of anything selfish or base. The higher elements of his character are well seen in the portrait which accompanies these pages There were darker and sterner traits which fitted him for the grim work he had to do and which are better shown in his bearded portraits, and in some which I possess, taken in the year 1857. But the face that here looks out upon us bespeaks that warm love for God's despised poor which was his deepest trait, and that noble disregard of everything but justice which distinguished his every action But above and beyond these personal qualities he was what we may best term a historic character; that is, he had, like Cromwell and [Spartacus](#), a certain predestined relation to the political crisis of his time, for which his character fitted him and which, had he striven against it, he could not avoid. Like Cromwell and all the great Calvinists, he was an unquestioning believer in God's fore-ordination and the divine guidance of human affairs; but he was free from the taint of guile that disfigured Cromwell's greatness. Of course, he could not rank with Cromwell or with many inferior men in leadership; but in this God-appointed, inflexible devotion to his object in life he was inferior to no man, and he rose in fame far above more gifted persons because of this very fixedness and simplicity of



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character. His renown is secure, and the artless (I must think prejudiced) narrative of Mr. Boteler does but increase it for those who read understandingly. As Tennyson said of the great Duke, we may say of Brown:

Whatever record leap to light,  
He never shall be shamed.

Young men never knew, perhaps, and some old men have forgotten, that we once had statesmen (so called) who loudly declared that negro slavery was the basis not only of our national greatness, but of the white man's freedom. This groveling doctrine found favor in Virginia in John Brown's time, and it was his work, as much as any man's, to overthrow it. A hundred years ago one of the great Virginians, a statesman indeed by nature and by training, said:

With what execration should that statesman be loaded who, permitting one-half the citizens to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots and these into enemies? Can the liberties of a nation be deemed secure when we have removed their only firm basis — a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God, that they are not to be violated without his wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country (Virginia) when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever; that, considering numbers, nature, and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune is among possible events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference. The Almighty has no attribute that can take sides with us in such a contest.

This was the language of Jefferson in his "Notes on Virginia," written in 1783, and it was in the county of Jefferson that Brown made his foray in 1859. He harbored in the county of Washington, in [Maryland](#), for three months. He descended upon Jefferson County in Virginia at the end of that time; and when the astonished successors of Washington and Jefferson saw him first, he held in his hand Washington's sword, and was enacting Jefferson's [Declaration of Independence](#) in favor of the slaves of Colonel Washington, — that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. And they were fulfilled to the utmost in the years of war and ruin that followed.

At the critical period of that [Civil War](#) when its issue was still undecided save in the councils of heaven, — at the close of the year 1862 Abraham Lincoln put forth his first edict of emancipation, and followed it up, January 1, 1863, with the final proclamation that the slaves in the rebellious States were from that day free. John Brown had been in his woodland grave among the Adirondack Mountains but little more than three years when we saw this triumph of his hopes, this crown of his toil and martyrdom. His friends gathered to celebrate so happy an event at the house of one of the most faithful and active of his



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supporters in the Virginia campaign, George Stearns, of Medford, in Massachusetts. It was one of the last of those meetings in which the old anti-slavery men and women came together with hearts united, and rejoiced together face to face. Garrison and Phillips were there, [Waldo Emerson](#) and [Bronson Alcott](#) ([Thoreau](#) had died eight months before), [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#) and his poetic wife, Mrs. Child, Moncure Conway, Martin Conway of Kansas, and many others now dead or widely sundered. The host and his wife, Mrs. Mary Stearns, who also had been an enthusiastic friend of John Brown, could give their guests not only the graceful hospitalities of a house always open to the friends of freedom, but what was then a new sight, Brackett's marble bust of Brown, standing crowned with flowers in the wide hall. This is the only bust of Brown for which the sculptor studied the hero's own features, and it was made after a visit by Brackett to Brown in prison at Charlestown. Though not, in all respects, a portrait, it has the air of Brown, with a majesty that made Charles Sumner exclaim, when he first saw it: "This is like the Moses of Michael Angelo." And when a sibylline negress, a fugitive from [Maryland](#), saw it in my house, she went into an ecstasy of grief and adoration, declaring that Brown was not a mere man, but the Messiah of her people.

"In a great age," says Cousin, speaking of Pascal, "everything is great." John Brown came to prominence in an age by no means grand or noble; but such was his own heroic character that he conferred importance on events in themselves trivial. His petty conflicts in Kansas and the details of his two days' campaign in Virginia will be remembered when a hundred battles of our [Civil War](#) are forgotten. He was one of ten thousand, and, as Thoreau said, could not be tried by a jury of his peers, because his peers did not exist; yet so much was he in accord with what is best in the American character that he will stand in history for one type of our people, as Franklin and Lincoln do, but with a difference. He embodied the distinctive qualities of the Puritan, but with a strong tincture of the more humane sentiments of later times. No man could be more sincere in his faith toward God, more earnest in love for man; his belief in fore-ordination was absolute, his courage not less so. The emotion of fear seemed to be quite unknown to him, except in the form of diffidence, — if that were not rather a sort of pride. He was diffident of his power in speech or writing, yet who, of all his countrymen, has uttered more effective or immortal words?

Part of the service he rendered to his country was by this heroic impersonation of traits that all mankind recognize as noble. The cause of the poor slave had need of all the charm that romantic courage could give it; his defenders were treated with the contempt which attached to himself. They were looked upon with aversion by patriots; they were odious to trade, distasteful to fashion and learning, impious in the sight of the Church. At the single stroke of Brown, all this was changed; the cause that had



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been despised suddenly became hated, feared, and respected; and out of this new fear and hatred our national safety was born. Ten years more of disgraceful security, and the nation might have been lost; but the rash and frantic efforts of the South to defend its barbarous system brought on the revolution that has regenerated us politically. No doubt the affair at Harpers Ferry hastened our political crisis by at least ten years, – and what fatal years they might have been but for John Brown! One evening in January, 1860, as I sat in Emerson's study at Concord, talking of this old friend of ours, for whose widow and orphans we were then raising a fund, I spoke to Emerson about a



speech of his at Salem, a few weeks earlier, in which the poet-philosopher had renewed his homage to the memory of Brown. He went to one of the cabinets in which his manuscripts were kept, took out the half-dozen pages on which his remarks had been written down, and gave them to me for publication. I have ever since cherished the manuscript, in which, with bold strokes of his quill, Emerson had written these words at the close:

It would be nearer the truth to say that all people, in proportion to their sensibility and self-respect, sympathize with John Brown. For it is impossible to see courage and disinterestedness and the love that casts out fear, without sympathy. All gentlemen, of course are on his side. I do not mean by "gentlemen" people of scented hair and perfumed handkerchiefs, but men of gentle blood and generosity, "fulfilled with all nobleness"; who, like the Cid, give the outcast leper a share of their bed – like the dying Sidney, pass the cup of cold water to the wounded soldier who needs it more. For what is the oath of gentle blood and knighthood? What but to protect the weak and lowly against the strong oppressor?

\* \* \*

Who makes the abolitionist? The slave-holder. The sentiment of mercy is the natural recoil which the laws of the universe provide to protect mankind from destruction by savage passions. The arch-abolitionist, older than Brown, and older than the Shenandoah Mountains, is Love, whose other name is Justice, – which was before Alfred, before Lycurgus, before Slavery and will be after it.

The generous, immortal traits which these words portray in Brown



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and bespeak in Emerson, are those which the artist has caught in the remarkable engraving of my old friend in this number of THE CENTURY.

F.B. Sanborn

**SECRET "SIX"**



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1884

The following comment appeared in this year in the North American Review:

Thomas Carlyle says that when any great change in human society is to be wrought, God raises up men to whom that change is made to appear as the one thing needful and absolutely indispensable. Scholars, orators, poets ... play their part, but the crisis comes at last through someone who is stigmatized as a fanatic by his contemporaries, and whom the supporters of the systems he assails crucifies between thieves or gibbet as a felon. The man who is not afraid to die for an idea is its most potential and convincing advocate.

About this martyrdom mindset, Eyal J. Naveh has offered in his CROWN OF THORNS: POLITICAL MARTYRDOM IN AMERICA FROM ABRAHAM LINCOLN TO MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (NY: New York UP, 1990, pages 46-7) that it had to do more with our spiritual whistling-in-the-dark than with any of the easy legitimations which we have been offering to one another:

As we have seen, American culture in the nineteenth century was receptive in general to the idea of martyrdom. People took religious symbolism seriously and believed in the cosmic structure of fall, sin, sacrifice, and redemption. Rhetoric that described sacrifice for the sin of slavery in order to purify America and to promote the kingdom of God made sense to many Americans. A description of John Brown as the ultimate altruist who sacrificed his life for such a purpose appealed to people who basically believed in the morality of the universe and the inevitability of linear progress. Such a worldview denied suffering by interpreting its temporal existence as having ultimately positive consequences. "The best portion of the people," wrote E.P. Stearns in an epilog to Herman von Holst's biography of Brown, "were pervaded and thrilled by the conviction that a martyr had laid down his life as an offering for the sins of the nation.... This seed sown in blood ... must bring forth a mighty harvest." This is an example of the genteel tradition, which, in fact, refused to accept suffering in a moral world and used the concept of martyrdom as a rationale for its apparent existence. The ultimate success of the cause for which the martyr had suffered not only uplifted him as an individual but also helped others to believe in the morality of their universe. Glorification of a martyr figure through the use of binary contrasts served to deny the existence of suffering in a moral universe created by a benevolent God.

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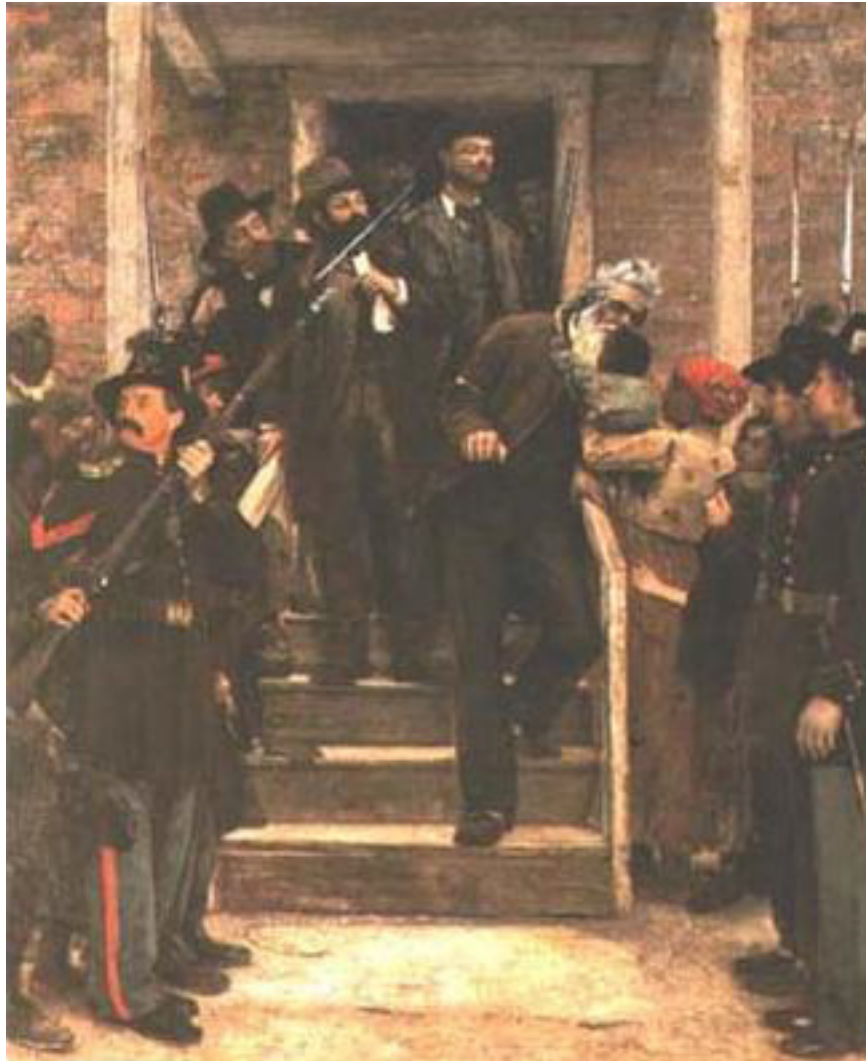
In this year, Thomas Hovenden prepared a painting depicting the famous falsehood, what supposedly had



taken place at the door of the Charlestown jail while [John Brown](#) was being led to his execution:

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At least this Thomas Hovenden got the backdrop for his sentimental picture reasonably accurate, for this was the Charlestown jail as it would appear in the year 1900:



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February 20, Wednesday: [Mary Ann Day Brown](#) died of cancer in the Bay Area.



1885

Brazil freed all [slaves](#) over the age of 60.

Margaret Davis Hayes and Addison Hayes moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado.

In the period after the [US Civil War](#) there was much reappraisal of that notion which had been so persuasive prior to the upheaval, that some heroic figures among humankind were animated by a “divine light” which released them from the constraints which ordinary mortals of limited vision were wise to operate in accordance with. Although citizens continued to think of rebellion as justified under the most oppressive regimes, the attempts to compare [John Brown](#) to [Spartacus](#)<sup>128</sup> or [Frederick Douglass](#) to [Toussaint Louverture](#) had come to be regarded as the most abjectly erroneous of readings.<sup>129</sup> In [THE DIAL](#) for this period we find assertions that



the “great man” theory of history as found in the [Secret “Six”](#) conspiracy before the [US Civil War](#) was

128. To attempt to compare Brown with Spartacus would be to attempt to compare a person who desired to eliminate the evil of [slavery](#) with a person whose desire it was to become himself the [slavemaster](#) — which would be, wouldn't you say, the mother of all Hollywoodish-inane category mistakes?



"...the slave, dreaming of the death of slavery..."  
— Kirk Douglas,  
preparing himself to play  
the title role in the 1961  
Hollywood movie "[Spartacus](#)"





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incompatible with the American belief in general progress:

[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) wrote within [Thomas Carlyle](#)'s theory of Great men namely that the world runs down ... through the deficiencies of merely common men, and would go to the bad entirely only it is so arranged that just in the nick of time the Lord sends down a Hero ... so ... that we can then get along for ... a generation or two.

The story of Brown's last stand as a martyr was under heavy attack. A certification written by Brown's jailer, Captain John Avis, appeared as eyewitness testimony to counter the story that Brown had kissed a black child, to refute the story had grown up to the effect that Brown had exhibited cheerfulness as he walked toward his place of execution, and to refute the account that had him giving thanks to God for the opportunity to die in such a cause.

The family of the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) returned to the United States, settling in New-York.

May 16, Saturday: For the 1st time Amy Marcy Cheney offered a recital entirely on her own, in Brookline, Massachusetts.

[Julia Ward Howe](#) recorded that she gave a "talk to the colored people, soon after two in the afternoon in their department. A pretty hexagonal platform had been arranged. Behind this was a fine portrait of Abraham Lincoln, with a vase of beautiful flowers [gladiolus and white lilies] at its base. I spoke of Dr. Channing, Garrison, Theodore Parker, Charles Sumner, John A. Andrew, Lucretia Mott, and Wendell Phillips, occupying about an hour. They gave me a fine basket of flowers and sang my 'Battle Hymn.' Afterwards, the Alabama cadets visited us. We gave them tea, cake and biscuits and I made a little speech for them."

They sang her "Battle Hymn of the Republic?" —This was 1885, not 1865. It had been during the [Civil War](#), in Washington DC after Mrs. Howe had heard a group of Union soldiers singing "John Brown's Body" with its ambiguous celebration—either of a Scottish tenor sergeant who had drowned at a river crossing, or of a hanged abolitionist martyr—that she had devised this righteous makeover of their song. What her Unitarian cause had needed had been something with the gravitas perhaps of a hymn, and so she had substituted a bunch of glowing generalities — glowing generalities that refrained from any celebration of particular "acts of violence." We have reason to doubt that any actual Union soldiers would have sung their song in such a manner during an actual war. Her rewrite actually had not become well known until considerably afterward. A new generation had needed to arise — a generation that had moved away from black freedom into the celebration of the death and rebirth of our great white union, a great white union epitomized by the glorification of a newer and much-to-be-preferred martyr, President Abraham Lincoln. It had only been in a "once upon a time" that [John Brown](#) had been the obligate martyr of the antislavery cause, and that had been only for lack of any better, but as soon as our President had been martyred this cause had no longer needed to rely on memories of any such problematic hanged traitor as Captain Brown.

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129. Refer to Brown, David, "Sanborn's Life of John Brown," [Dial](#) 6 (1885-1886):139-40, to an editorial entitled "John Brown," [New England and Yale Review](#) 45 (1886):289-302, and to Jenks, Leland H. "The John Brown Myth," [American Mercury](#) (1924):268.

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1887

[Eli Thayer](#) waxed wroth against [abolitionists](#) with whom he had been entangled before the Civil War, in [THE NEW ENGLAND EMIGRANT AID COMPANY AND ITS INFLUENCE, THROUGH THE KANSAS CONTEST, UPON NATIONAL HISTORY](#) (Worcester; Franklin P. Rice).

A photo was snapped during this year that would eventually be useful for a postcard sold to tourists at [Harpers Ferry](#), marking it with an **X** to reveal the point of greatest tourist attraction:



[JOHN BROWN](#)

Here we come to an utterly embarrassing episode in post-[Civil War](#) mythmaking: In his novel [PINE AND PALM](#) (NY: Holt, 1887, page 531), the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) depicted an American mob preparing to lynch a black man: “Just then from a remote corner stepped forward a quaint little man, with large luminous eyes, whom few even of the antislavery men recognized as Thoreau, and placed himself in front of the rush, so quietly – as if he did not see it – that the crowd was surprised into momentary stillness. ‘Doubtless,’ he said,



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‘you all remember that fine passage in the Bhagavatgita where Krishna says to Arjuna, Thou and I have met many times.’ The mob was breathless. ‘I may now say that you and I have met in various ages of the world.’ Here somebody exploded in a laugh, which made the crowd laugh. The mob that laughs is lost. The ringleaders vainly tried to rally their forces. Thoreau was heard to the end of his estimate of how many births the mob and the [abolitionists](#) had gone through.”<sup>130</sup>

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130. [Moncure Daniel Conway](#). PINE AND PALM: A NOVEL. By Moncure D. Conway. In two volumes. 1887. London: Chatto & Windus.

[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)

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[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)



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1895

September 16, Monday: On the spongy bank of the Shenandoah River near [Harpers Ferry](#) on the property of a pulp mill, 2 sunken spots indicated where the bodies of 7 or 8 of [Captain John Brown](#)'s fighters had been re-interred in 2 crates. Digging down, it turned out that the tops of the crates were at a depth of 3 feet, and when one of the lids was removed, grisly skeletons inside mouldered clothing were seen and smelled. Due to the water-soaked terrain the skeletons had gone soft, preserving mostly long hard bones such as femurs.

We finally uncovered the whole top of the box and I raised the cover, to which the whole backbone of a man was adherent. This incident shows how closely the bodies had been packed in the box. The box was some six feet in length, four feet wide and three feet in depth ... and was remarkably well preserved.... This coffin contained the remains of four of the invaders. Portions of the clothing were still to be distinguished.... There were great masses of woolen tissue surrounding each one of the dead men. These blankets or shawls were worn by the men as overcoats when they started out on the raid.... One of the skulls that I picked out from the ooze was all in pieces as if it had been shattered.... After becoming fully satisfied that we had the remains of the raiders before us, we replaced the cover of the box.





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1899

July 28, Friday, evening: [Orin Grant Libby](#) arrived at the [Harpers Ferry](#) railroad station bringing in the baggage car a large empty trunk — one intended for the remainders of the soldiers of [Captain John Brown](#)'s Provisional Army of the United States.

July 29, Saturday, before dawn: At [Harpers Ferry](#), Virginia, [Orin Grant Libby](#) crossed the bridge over the Shenandoah River and headed upstream along its bank. He reconnoitered before returning to town for breakfast. He met Dr. Thomas Featherstonhaugh of Washington DC, accompanied by Captain E.P. Hall. The Doctor had hired 3 local men to perform the actual excavation. The two burial crates were again dug up. "The ... great boxes ... from being constantly wet, were remarkably preserved. Most of the smaller bones had crumbled away, but the long bones ... were recovered.... There were portions of coats and vests with the buttons still in position upon them, and from one of the vest pockets dropped two short lead pencils, all sharpened for use." Recovered were 8 corpses of the soldiers of [Captain John Brown](#)'s Provisional Army of the United States: [Oliver Brown](#), [William Thompson](#) and [Dauphin Adolphus Thompson](#), younger brothers of Henry Thompson of North Elba who got married with Captain Brown's eldest daughter Ruth Brown in 1850, [Stewart Taylor](#), [John Henry Kagi](#), [William H. Leeman](#), [Dangerfield Newby](#), and [Lewis Sheridan Leary](#).

"There was little remaining intact of the bodies, but not a little of the clothing was still recognizable. The rusted brass buttons (and) buckles...told the story plainly. On account of the peculiar coat worn by John Brown's son, Oliver, we were able to identify his resting place ... in the easternmost of the two graves. From the account of those who saw the burial, they were thrown in carelessly.... And the arrangement of the bones when they were disinterred confirms this report fully."

These remains were to be re-interred at the [John Brown](#) homestead in upstate [New York](#).

The [New Bedford Evening Standard](#) noted in regard to the forthcoming anniversary of the [emancipation](#) of the slaves of the British West Indies, that although "once in a while, a party of some sort was arranged on August 1, the animated scenes which were once the custom return now only as memories."



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1900

At about the turn of the century the area of downtown [Providence, Rhode Island](#) available to its [Chinese](#) population was being narrowed down, by urban renewal projects, to the point that all of Chinatown was made up of one stretch along Empire Street. Surprise, the white people didn't really want the Chinese around.

In this year or the following one, the [Quaker](#) schoolhouse near Princeton, [New Jersey](#), virtually abandoned and a ruin, would be torn down. The land on which it stood is now the parking lot of the new school. The [Eagleswood](#) properties had been long converted to industrial uses and the old graveyard there neglected. The caskets of the hanged Brown guerrilla fighters [Aaron D. Stevens](#) and [Albert Hazlett](#) were removed during this period to graves in the vicinity of the [John Brown](#) grave, under its boulder in the Adirondacks.

An American company, Quaker Oats, had obtained hoardings in the vicinity of the white cliffs of Dover, England, for purposes of advertising use. It is not known whether this advertising was to constitute Q-U-A-K-E-R--O-A-T-S individual letter signs atop the range of hills, in H-O-L-L-Y-W-O-O-D-L-A-N-D fashion, or cloth banners hung down over the white surface of the cliffs by means of cables, or some sort of painting on the white cliffs themselves. It is not known whether this was merely a plan, or whether there was in fact some actual signage erected. In either event, the Dover council was able to secure a local Act of Parliament, creating local authority control over unsuitable advertisings. (It is to be noted that when the predecessor to this company, Quaker Oat Mill, was formed on September 4, 1877 in Ravenna, Ohio by Henry Seymour and William Heston, it registered its trademark as "a figure of a man in 'Quaker garb,'" bearing a paper on which





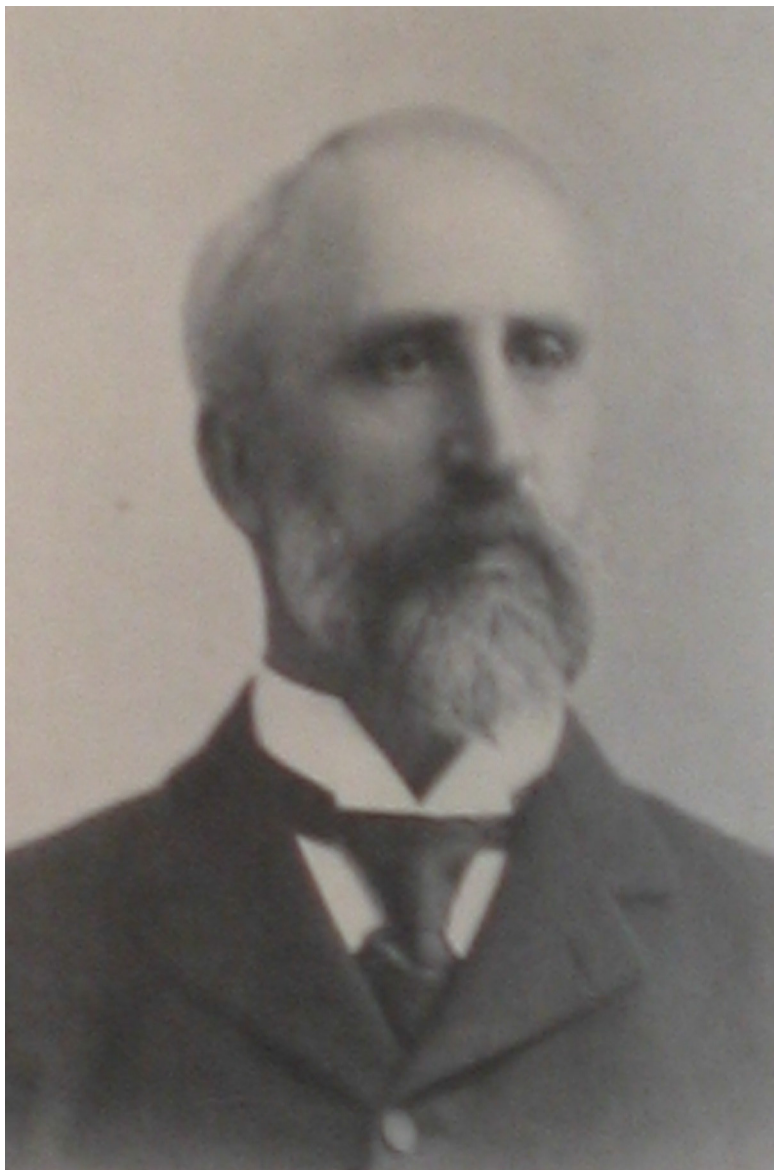
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the inscription PURE was visible, despite the fact that the clothing of the unsmiling portly male figure in their application drawing most definitely is not the Quaker plain dress. Shortly thereafter, the Religious Society of Friends attempted to obtain judicial or legislative relief, asking that there be a ruling or law preventing the use of the name of any church, religious denomination, or society as a trademark or trade name by any commercial corporation, to which the company responded that it valued the “good-will” associated with this trademark at more than \$9,000,000. Who is going to recompense them \$9,000,000 or more for their corporate investment in this image? –Of course, this being America, Mammon came in first and God second.)

Publication, in [Providence, Rhode Island](#), of Friend Augustine Jones’s BRIEF HISTORY OF PROVIDENCE FRIENDS SCHOOL, about the [Yearly Meeting School](#) of the [Religious Society of Friends](#) on top of the hill.





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## “NARRATIVE HISTORY” IS FABULATION, HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY

At this point Barrett Wendell, in his *A LITERARY HISTORY OF AMERICA*, uncritically bought into the category “American Renaissance” formed in 1876 by Samuel Osgood.

At this point Marcel Proust (according to William H. Carter’s *MARCEL PROUST: A LIFE*, published by Yale UP in 2000) was contemplating the abandonment of his diligent pursuit of the idle rich, to take up a serious project, that of translating *WALDEN* into the French language. —Well, this would turn out to be yet another idle fancy.



William Sidney Drewry, interviewing still-living witnesses to the death of Nat Turner in 1831, was informed that the doctors who had taken charge of the body had skinned it and then had it rendered into grease. He was informed that, until it had disappeared mysteriously, Turner’s skeleton had been in the possession of a Dr. Massenberg. He was informed that a Mr. R.S. Barham’s father owned “a money purse made of his hide.”

There are many citizens still living who have seen Nat’s skull. It was very peculiarly shaped, resembling the head of a sheep, and at least three-quarters of an inch thick.

### THE MARKET FOR HUMAN BODY PARTS

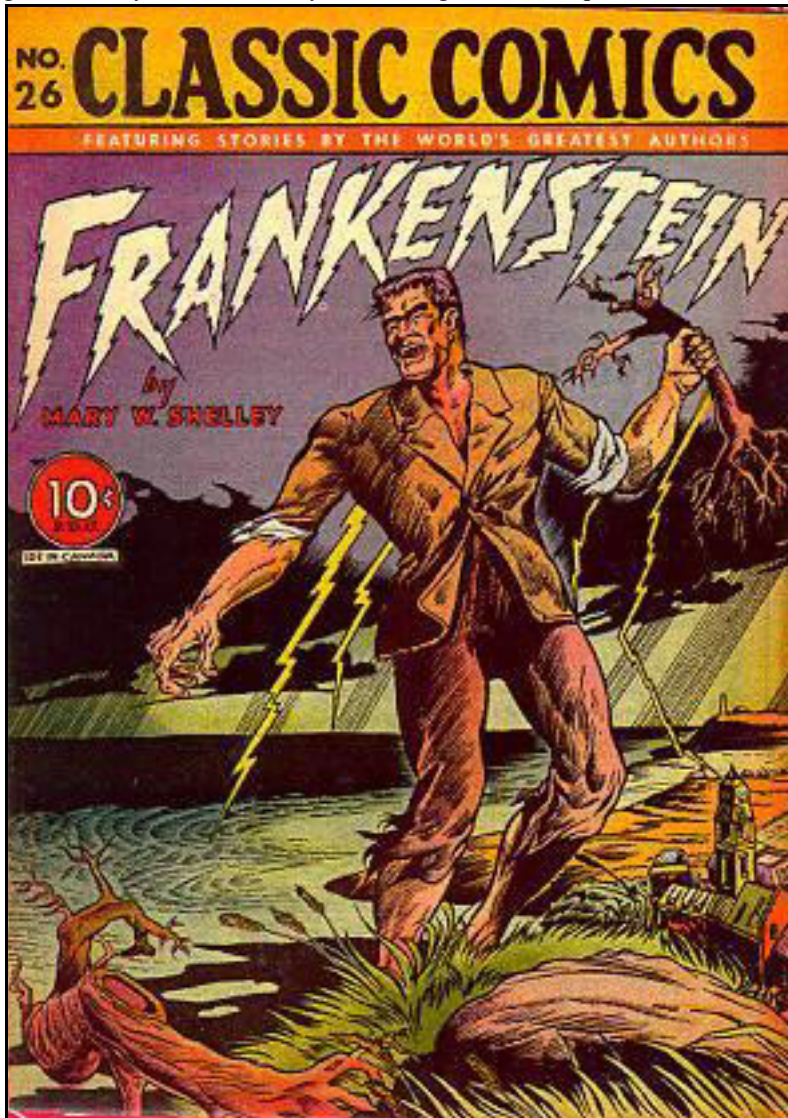
This treatment of the corpse of an insurrectionist, or, this reported treatment, differed greatly from the

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treatment which would be awarded to a comparison figure, “Captain” [John Brown](#). A professor of anatomy at the University of Virginia had requested that Governor [Henry A. Wise](#) provide him with Brown’s head for examination. The body might be supplied too, the professor suggested — so long as shipping costs were not too high. Wise declined this on the curious grounds that he admired Brown’s bravery, but Brown’s body almost wound up decapitated after his hanging, anyway. What would the attending physicians at the white man’s execution be up to? —They would be concerned that, shades of Mary Shelley’s “Dr. Frankenstein’s monster,” perhaps Brown might be revivable by his friends through the use of “galvanic batteries.” However, by the time these physicians enjoyed their lunch, they would note that the corpse had not moved during the interim, and would be sufficiently assured that it was sufficiently discharged of its vital electric fluid as not to be plugged in and recharged, that they would not carry out their agenda to decapitate.<sup>131</sup>



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131. Although this macabre incident may remind us of Mary Shelly's novel of that century, it may also remind us of a quite recent pseudo-documentary in which Timothy Leary's head, or what appears to be his head, is removed for cryogenic storage subsequent to his death by currently incurable cancer. It has been suggested that the difference in treatment between the black corpse and the white corpse is an illustration of the Southern code of honor, according to which only a brave man, who scorned death, would have been considered to be worthy of freedom. Consider, for instance, that the story told of Nat Turner's capture was that he surrendered abjectly to the one white man who discovered him inside his cave, throwing out his sword onto the ground, taking into account that this story of Turner's capture, a story which needed to be told, was already in circulation while the insurrectionist was in fact still very much at large.






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1904

 The Trans-Siberian Railroad was completed.

The Geological Society of London for the 1st time allowed women geologists to participate.  
(Previously, a gender ban had been enforced — and such luminaries as T.H. Huxley had supported it. :-)

At a meeting of the Emerson Society in Boston, several items of Thoreauviana were displayed which cannot now be located:

 The Thoreau scrap-book relating to Brown's martyrdom was shown, — a volume of many pages folio, made by Henry and Sophia Thoreau in the two months following the Virginia foray, and closing with the execution of Stevens and the colored men, December 16, 1859. Therein appear many of the particulars of that exciting period, made up from the New York Tribune and the Boston newspapers, — including the speeches of Emerson and Thoreau in praise of Brown, his prison letters, and many other matters related thereto.

(Anyone having information on the present location of this material, obviously, should communicate this information.)

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## 1909

October 17, Sunday: It was the 50th anniversary of [John Brown](#)'s raid on [Harpers Ferry](#), and the survivors of that scheme met in the riverside brick mansion of [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), on Elm Street in Concord.



When the 77-year-old Sanborn took [Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#)'s elbow to lead his 86-year-old friend into the sitting room, the Colonel pulled his arm away — despite the fact that the Reverend was now walking by use of a cane. In the sitting room, a circle of six chairs had been set out, one chair for each of the original [Secret "Six"](#): The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#), [Gerrit Smith](#), [George Luther Stearns](#), [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#), [Colonel Higginson](#), and [Sanborn](#), despite the fact that Parker, Smith, Stearns, and Howe had by this point deceased. The chair for Dr. Howe was occupied by 90-year-old [Julia Ward Howe](#), who remained seated when the others entered, with a shawl around her shoulders. Julia had her ear trumpet with her so that she would not need to miss any of the conversation. Also in the room was a young reporter, Katherine Mayo, who had been detailed to take copious notes by a grandson of [William Lloyd Garrison](#), the author Oswald Garrison Villard. Villard was then wrapping up work on a study of Captain Brown that hopefully would be an improvement on Sanborn's botched 1885 attempt at a biography. [Colonel Higginson](#) needed to make certain that Miss Mayo clearly understood, so that she could convey this information to Villard, that he and the other members of this 6-member finance committee had been entirely aware of [John Brown](#)'s intent to incite a slave rebellion in Virginia, and that they'd been quite as prepared that Brown's raid would turn into a disaster for him and his little band as they had been prepared that it might prove against all odds to be a success.

[SERVILE INSURRECTION](#)





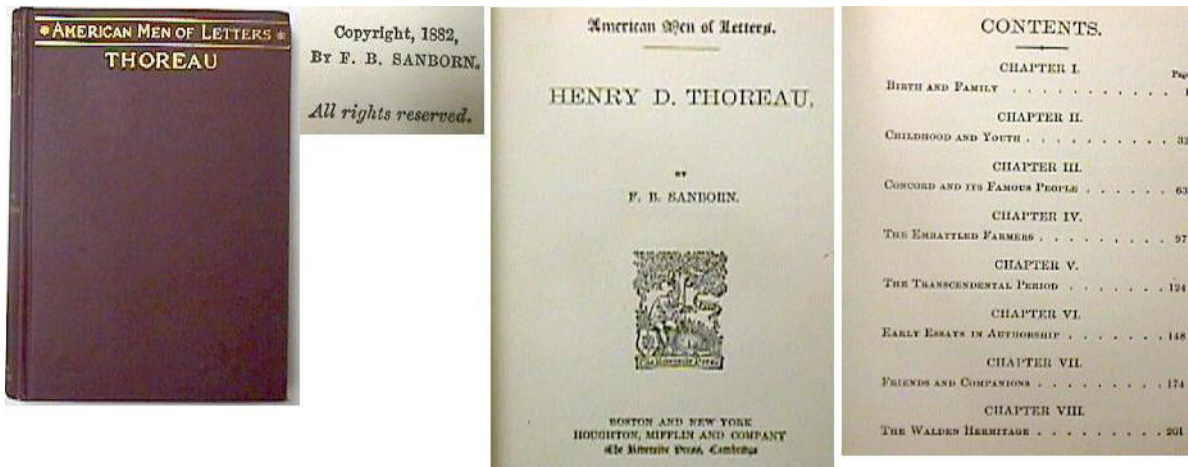
RACE WAR,

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1910

When Oswald Garrison Villard's JOHN BROWN 1800-1859: A BIOGRAPHY FIFTY YEARS AFTER appeared and [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) had a chance to look at it, he was somewhat more than startled, for, unexpectedly, his hero [John Brown](#) was being depicted as a renegade, cold-blooded religious fanatic who'd failed in everything he'd ever undertaken excepting slaughter and mayhem. His backers in the north were in this heavy brown tome being treated as merely a clutch of New England Brahmins who had come under the hypnotic gaze of a Kansas terrorist who would need to be hanged, and under the finger of a richie-rich real estate guy from New York who would need to spend some time in an insane asylum.<sup>132</sup>

In this year "American Men of Letters" printed a revised edition of [Sanborn](#)'s 1882 HENRY D. THOREAU:



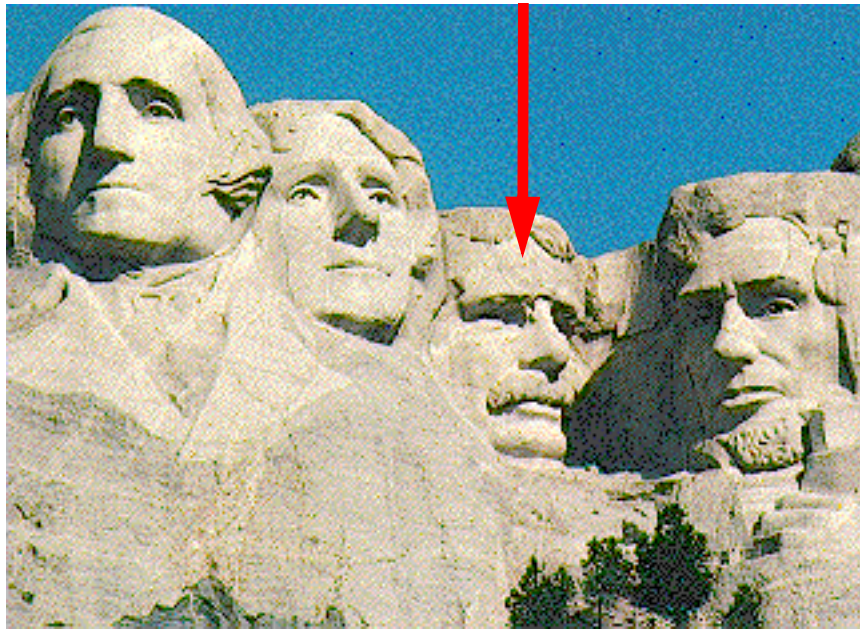
VIEW THE PAGE IMAGES

132.  Villard, Oswald Garrison. [JOHN BROWN](#) 1800-1859: A BIOGRAPHY FIFTY YEARS AFTER. Gloucester MA: Peter Smith, 1910, reprinted 1965

## RACE WAR,

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End of August: Theodore Roosevelt, fresh from his African safari, at the helm of a new third party (the Progressives), having withdrawn his support of his handpicked successor to the Presidency (William Howard Taft), spoke at the dedication of the [John Brown](#) battlefield at Osawatomic, Kansas. He condemned the abolitionists and characterized the praise they had been receiving as hysterical. Much of what the abolitionists had done was positively harmful to the cause for which they were fighting. They had taken credit for deeds accomplished by other men, men whom they in reality had been hampering and opposing rather than aiding. Roosevelt seized the occasion to cry out for a New Nationalism, a stronger federal government that would give the American people a Square Deal, by putting human rights before property rights. “When I say that I am for the Square Deal,” he orated, “I mean not merely that I stand for fair play under the present rules of the game, but that I stand for having those rules changed so as to work for a more substantial equality of opportunity and of reward for equally good service.”





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1911

Summer: In Bellingham, Massachusetts during a speaking tour, [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) named the members of the so-called [Secret "Six"](#) committee and boasted of having been among them. He alleged that these persons had been aiding Captain [John Brown](#)'s plans with money and active support — although none of them with the possible exception of the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) were confident of Brown's competence or of the likelihood of his success.





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1916

June 30: Ambassador von Wolff-Metternich reported to the German Chancellor that Ittihad was devouring the remaining Armenian refugees.

On the argument that those who refused were going to be deported into the desert again, the proposal was made to the Armenian labor battalions in Damascus and to the civilian deportees that they convert to Islam. Very few would accept.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Sarah Brown, one of the younger of [John Brown](#)'s 20 children, who had come west with her mother [Mary Ann Day Brown](#) and lived in Rohnerville for a number of years, died at her daughter's home in Campbell, [California](#).

[Mexico](#) released the 23 prisoners of war taken at Carrizal.

WORLD WAR I



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1917

January 2, Tuesday: Negotiations between [Robinson Jeffers](#) and the War Department had proceeded to the point at which the poet had received orders to respond by this date to the Local Board for Monterey County, Salinas, [California](#) with “draft data necessary for induction”:

Red Ink Serial Number 2060, Local Order Number 1529

In reply to this summons, however, the poet filed a claim for exemption:

ANSWERING QUESTIONNAIRE, DECEMBER 31, I CLAIMED DEFERRED  
CLASSIFICATION (CLASS IV) ON ACCOUNT OF DEPENDENT WIFE AND TWO  
CHILDREN, CLAIM STILL PENDING.

(Although this claim for exemption would be granted by the local [draft board](#), by that point Jeffers would again have changed his mind and would be volunteering to become a pilot!)

WORLD WAR I

[Salmon Brown](#) was quoted in [The Ferndale Enterprise](#) as averring that “The tannery business, farming, wool buying and the raising of blooded stock were my father’s life occupations, though all of them were subordinated to his one consuming passion — freeing the slaves.”

JOHN BROWN

**THE FALLACY OF MOMENTISM: THIS STARRY UNIVERSE DOES NOT  
CONSIST OF A SEQUENCE OF MOMENTS. THAT IS A FIGMENT, ONE WE  
HAVE RECOURSE TO IN ORDER TO PRIVILEGE TIME OVER CHANGE,  
A PRIVILEGING THAT MAKES CHANGE SEEM UNREAL, DERIVATIVE, A  
MERE APPEARANCE. IN FACT IT IS CHANGE AND ONLY CHANGE WHICH  
WE EXPERIENCE AS REALITY, TIME BEING BY WAY OF RADICAL  
CONTRAST UNEXPERIENCED — A MERE INTELLECTUAL CONSTRUCT.  
THERE EXISTS NO SUCH THING AS A MOMENT. NO “INSTANT” HAS  
EVER FOR AN INSTANT EXISTED.**



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1919

May 10, Saturday: The *Freikorps* suppressed the communists of Leipzig.

PROTO-NAZISM

After a number of setbacks at his sheep ranch, [Salmon Brown](#) had moved his family to Portland, Oregon. Apparently despondent over illness (he had been partly paralyzed for some time), on this day at the age of 82 the last surviving son of [John Brown](#) killed himself.



SUICIDE



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1921

In France, Léon Bazalgette issued a miscellany titled *DÉSOMBÉIR* which included:

- *LA VIE SANS PRINCIPE*
- *DÉSOMBÉIR AUX LOIS*
- *L'ESCLAVAGE CHEZ NOUS*
- *POUR [JOHN BROWN](#)*
- *SES DERNIERS MOMENTS*
- *MARCHER*
- *L'HÔTE*

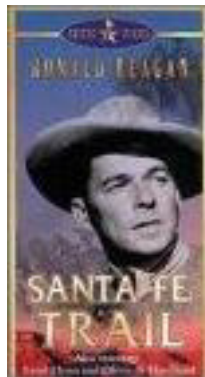


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1940

Errol Flynn, Ronald Reagan, and Olivia de Havilland starred in a mean-spirited Western, “Santa Fe Trail,” in which a group of US Cavalry officers at West Point, J.E.B. Stuart, George Armstrong Custer, and four friends, in trouble for fighting among themselves, are banished as punishment to the Kansas Territory to bring [John Brown](#) under control. The movie is so idiotic about slavery that it has a black character declare “If this is freedom, I don’t want none of it.” Enslaved black Americans are depicted as wholeheartedly devoted to the wellbeing of their white overlords and the abolitionist Captain Brown is shown to disdain them.







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**1944**

Thomas Hovenden painted the “Last Moments of John Brown” based upon the newspaper account designed to disgust, which had alleged that the condemned traitor and murderer [John Brown](#) had sunk so far into depravity that while on his way to the scaffold he had paused and kissed a black child. In this painting the myth originally designed to disgust and alienate the newspaper readers has become a PC myth designed to delight. The child reaches to grasp a hempen noose already placed loosely about the condemned man’s neck.

### Sunspots

| Min /Max   |
|------------|
| 1901 -1905 |
| 1913 -1917 |
| 1924 -1928 |
| 1933 -1938 |
| 1944 -1948 |
| 1954 -1958 |
| 1965 -1970 |
| 1976 -1980 |
| 1986 -1989 |
| 199? -19?? |





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**1962**

January 11, Thursday: During his State of the Union address, [President John Fitzgerald Kennedy](#) averred that “Few generations in all of history have been granted the role of being the great defender of freedom in its maximum hour of danger.” He went on to characterize this as “our good fortune.”<sup>133</sup>

**VIETNAM**



The US Marines issued a 20-page pamphlet in praise of guess-who for having in 1859 stopped the raid by Captain [John Brown](#) on the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#):

**THE UNITED STATES MARINES**

**AT**

**HARPER’S FERRY, 1859**

**Historical Branch, G-3 Division**

**Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps**

**Washington, D. C.**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**

**HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

**WASHINGTON 25, D. C.**

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133. The special Washington terminology that describes such head-up-your-own-ass assertions is “spin.”



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**REVIEWED AND APPROVED 11 JAN 1962**

**H. W. BUSE, JR.**

**Brigadier General, U. S. Marine Corps**

**Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3<sup>134</sup>**

Brevet Colonel the detachment of Marines [Robert E. Lee](#), from his report to the Adjutant General of the suppression of John Brown's Raid.

James Ewell Brown Stuart, First Lieutenant, U.S. Cavalry, was enjoying six months' leave from his frontier post at Fort Riley, Kansas Territory. Yet, the joys of coming home to Virginia had not made him forget that he was a cavalryman by profession. On the rainy morning of 17 October 1859 he had ridden over the muddy streets of Washington to the office of the War Department, and now he sat waiting to speak with Secretary of War John B. Floyd. Jeb Stuart had an idea for a new type strap to fasten a cavalryman's sabre to his belt. While the young lieutenant was rehearsing in his mind for the coming interview, the Secretary himself was face to face with the spectre of a slave insurrection.

John B. Floyd was a poor administrator, a failing which almost resulted in his removal from office; but on this day there was no need for paper shuffling. Word had come by way of Baltimore that an insurrection had broken out at Harper's Ferry. A band of armed men had captured the United States arsenal there and was fomenting a slave rebellion. A native of Virginia, the Secretary must have heard the oft-told tales of the Haitians revolt against their French masters with all its barbarism. Nor had any son of the Old Dominion forgotten Nat Turner's Rebellion, a slave uprising which occurred a generation before and claimed the lives of 55 whites in a single bloody night.

Swinging at once into action, Floyd fired off a telegram to Fort Monroe; and by noon Captain Edward O.C. Ord with 150 coast artillerymen was on his way toward Baltimore on the first leg of the journey to Harper's Ferry. There was no question as to who would command operations against the insurgents. Floyd called for his chief clerk and set him to writing orders summoning to the War Department Brevet Colonel Robert E. Lee,

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134. This 20-page booklet is a reprint of "At All Times Ready..." by Bernard C. Nalty, describing how in 1859 the USMC squashed the takeover of the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia by the forces of Captain John Brown.



**RACE WAR,**

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then on leave at his estate, Arlington, just across the Potomac from the Capital.

Message in hand, the harassed aide came dashing out of the office, only to halt when he spied the forgotten cavalry officer. Stuart, by now thoroughly bored, was easily persuaded to deliver the sealed envelope. Even as this message was speeding toward its destination, President James Buchanan called upon Secretary Floyd to move even faster a demand which was to bring the Marine Corps into the picture.

Since there were no troops nearer the scene of the uprising than those en route from Fort Monroe, Floyd was powerless to comply; but Secretary of the Navy Isaac Toucey quickly offered a solution to his dilemma. About noon Charles W. Welsh, chief clerk of the Navy Department, came riding through the main gate of the Washington Navy Yard. He sought out First Lieutenant Israel Greene, temporarily in command of Marine Barracks, Washington, and asked how many Leathernecks were available for duty. Greene estimated that he could round up some 90 men from both his barracks and the small Navy Yard detachment. He then asked Welsh what was wrong. The civilian told him all he knew—that the armory at Harper's Ferry had been seized by a group of abolitionists and that state and federal troops already were on the march....

Learning that the militiamen, whatever their faults, had at least forced the insurgents to barricade themselves in a single small building on the armory grounds—the Engine House—Lee decided to attack as quickly as possible. Because of the danger to the hostages, a night assault was out of the question, so the colonel, his aide, and the Marines crossed the river to await the dawn.

About 2300 on the night of 17 October, Greene led his men across the covered bridge and into the armory yard...



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1967

Edward Dahlberg's *THE LEAFLESS AMERICAN AND OTHER WRITINGS* was published by Roger Beacham. Also appearing in this year were *EPITAPHS OF OUR TIMES: THE LETTERS OF EDWARD DAHLBERG* and *The EDWARD DAHLBERG READER*, which was edited by Paul Carroll and published by New Directions.



Re-release of 1939's crowdpleasing *Gone with the Wind*, which is up alongside the black-and-white

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blockbuster *The Birth of a Nation* as one of the five most lucrative movies of all time.

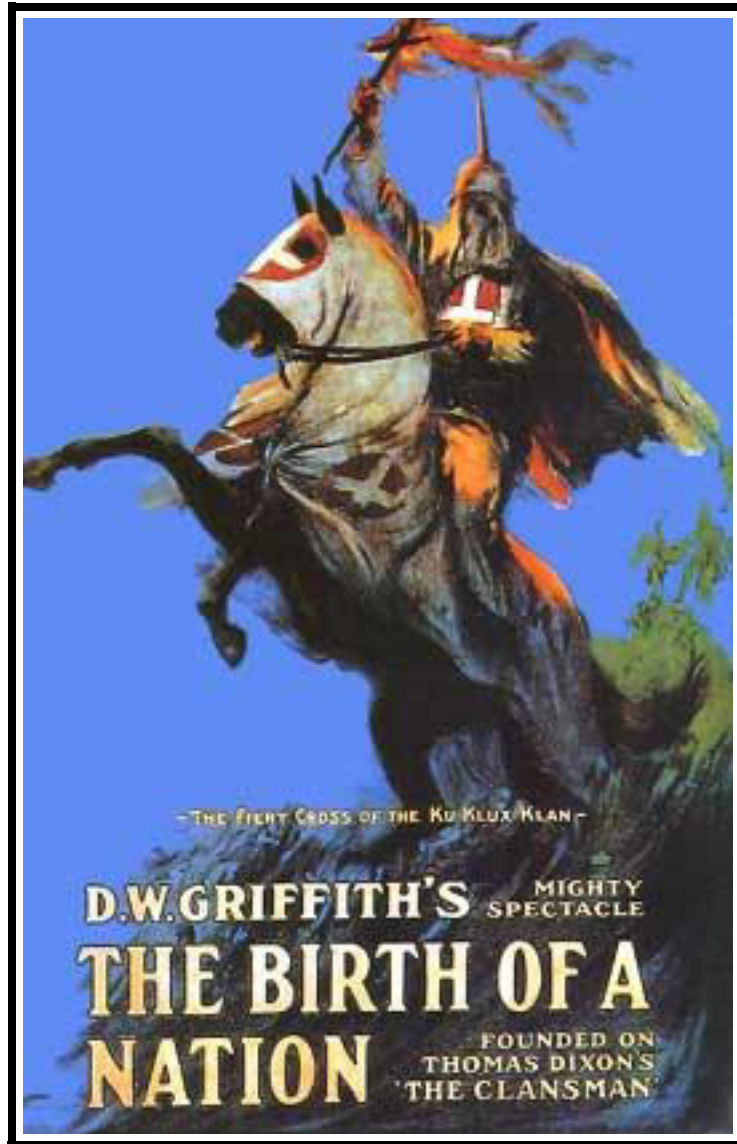


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Random House issued a 400-page meditation on history by William Styron entitled THE CONFESSION OF NAT TURNER. On the last page of this book which asserts that it is not a mere “historical novel,” Styron purports to be quoting from a historical treatise by “Drewry” entitled THE SOUTHAMPTON INSURRECTION, and one is led to wonder whether this actually is a part of some purported historical record or whether one may be allowed to hope that this is merely something outrageous, cut from the whole cloth of fantasy, which Styron imagined in order to end his book on a really low note:

The bodies of those executed, with one exception, were buried in a decent and becoming manner. That of Nat Turner was delivered to the doctors, who skinned it and made grease of the flesh. Mr. R.S. Barham’s father owned a money purse made out of his hide. His skeleton was for many years in the possession of Dr. Massenberg, but has since been misplaced.

– Drewry, THE SOUTHAMPTON INSURRECTION

Here is a table showing the political correctness of America’s schoolbooks, whereby it was possible to attack most severely a white author who had had the utter racist temerity to treat of a black man as if he were a complicated being with all-too-human failings:

| <b>Benefit-of-the-Doubt Comparison Chart</b>                            |                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><u>Nat Turner</u></b>                                                | <b><u>John Brown</u></b>                                             |
| • not a white man                                                       | • a white man                                                        |
| • killed people in cold blood                                           | • killed people in cold blood                                        |
| • saw visions                                                           | • saw no visions                                                     |
| • heard voices                                                          | • heard no voices                                                    |
| • said to have been “driven to extreme action”                          | • said to have been “insane”                                         |
| • said to have been “unschooled”                                        | • said to have been “narrowly ignorant”                              |
| • said to have been “deeply religious”                                  | • said to have been a “religious fanatic”                            |
| • said to have been “eager to see something done to destroy the system” | • said to have “somehow” gotten “interested in helping black slaves” |



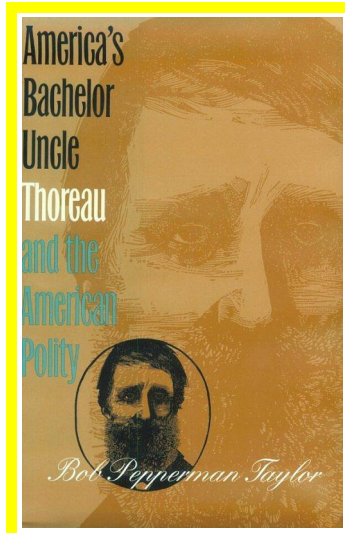


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1981

Stanley Cavell offered that “As against the usual views about Thoreau’s hatred of society and his fancied private declaration of independence from it, it is worth hearing him from the outset publicly accept a nation’s promise.” This qualifies Cavell as one of the significant seven scholars who have been able to swim against the stream of calumny leveled against [Henry Thoreau](#) by the [Emerson](#)-worshippers (the other six wise ones: Professor [F.O. Matthiessen](#) in 1941, John C. Broderick in 1955, Leo Stoller in 1957, Sherman Paul in 1958, Wilson Carey McWilliams in 1973, and [Bob Pepperman Taylor](#) in 1996). Taylor has remarked, in his *AMERICA’S BACHELOR UNCLE: THOREAU AND THE AMERICAN POLITY* (Lawrence KA: UP of Kansas, 1996, page 7), that “Thoreau is, on the whole, the political thinker scholars of American political thought love to either ignore or hate.” One of the instances which he has offered of this is Nancy L. Rosenblum, opinionioning in this year that Thoreau’s view of political and social life was separated “from everything concrete” by a “militant conscience” which inspired only “self-assertion,” and “antagonism” toward others. For Taylor, by way of contrast with Cavell, Rosenblum constitutes a classic case of resistance to [Thoreau](#).



This *bête noir* of her fantasy life was guilty of the most egregiously belligerent and intransigent antagonism toward others and toward society at large: “The three pieces on [John Brown](#) have virtually nothing to say about



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slavery at all. Thoreau's emphasis is neither the justice of abolition nor the efficacy of Brown's raids. He was principally interested in [John Brown](#) as a representative of antagonism as a way of life." Her trope for the understanding of such literary fantasists was "[I]nspiration is incompatible with establishment and takes no notice of justice or public order." As far as she was concerned, Thoreau's sort of antipolitical stance "admitted no alternative idea of the state to Leviathan."<sup>135</sup>

According to L. Ziff, in *LITERARY DEMOCRACY: THE CULTURAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IN AMERICA* (NY: Viking, 1981, page 219): "... [Thoreau](#) alone among the New England authors of his day is comfortable with, indeed hungry for, the uncontrolled fecundity of nature.... We need the tonic of wildness to explain our death to us and thus to sharpen our lives."

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135. As Taylor pointed out, Rosenbloom would be back with further thoughts along this line, in 1987. Over the course of 6 years of study she would not learn better than this.



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1988

In this year Terry Bisson created a piece of science fiction or alternate history, a novel FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN. Thoreau appears in this novel. The synopsis of this alternate history is that Captain [John Brown](#) and his men are able to adhere to their original schedule and conduct their raid on the federal arsenal at [Harpers Ferry](#), Virginia on the symbolic 4th of July 1859. In this version [Harriet Tubman](#) does not claim at the last moment that she has “gotten sick” and cannot come (as in real life she claimed, after having a prophesy dream foretelling doom) and became a general for them. They succeed in getting away from the federal arsenal with weapons, up into the mountains, and General Tubman attracts an army of runaways. The result, however, in this alternative history, is not the sort of genocide or racial pogrom which I myself fear would actually have been the resultant of a temporary “success,” but a 2nd Revolutionary War between American blacks and American whites in which our one nation splits permanently rather than temporarily into two. Clearly, this author Terry Bisson was struggling to use the form of science fiction and the form of the alternative-history novel to create a disruptive story in which Harpers Ferry is not the initiating event of the [US Civil War](#) which freed the slaves through the benevolence of The White People Who Want To Do What Is Right, but the initiating event of a 2nd American Revolution in which the American slaves free themselves from the whites precisely as the whites had previously freed themselves from the crown. [Abraham Lincoln](#), in this novel, becomes just another racist white cracker determined to hold the United States of America together as one nation indivisible; in order to achieve this grand objective he is determined to off all the black Americans — whom he disdains (just like in real life) as subhumans. [Frederick Douglass](#), in this novel, rather than running away to England (as he did in real life), upon seeing the initial success of the raid, thinks better of abandoning the cause, and puts himself forward as a political leader for it. In the course of the novel the Douglass character has an opportunity to deliver a truly awesome speech — every bit as good as ones he actually did deliver in real life. Walt Whitman, instead of becoming a male nurse in Washington-area war hospitals (as he did in real life), joins the rebel forces in the mountains. [Giuseppe Garibaldi](#) of the red shirt, instead of disdaining the war (as he did in real life, when the northern government would not promise him that it would eventually free the slaves), comes over from Italy and raises an army of liberators in [Mexico](#) that invades north to assist the black rebels.



“Lincoln must be seen as the embodiment, not the transcendence, of the American tradition of racism.”

— Lerone Bennett, Jr.,

FORCED INTO GLORY:

[ABRAHAM LINCOLN](#)'S WHITE DREAM

(Johnson Publishing, 1999)



On page 147 of Terry Bisson’s alternate-history FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN, in Concord, Massachusetts, [Waldo Emerson](#) and [Henry Thoreau](#) are having their own little Civil War with one another, a war of words with Henry apparently taking the side of Douglass, Tubman, and the black freedom fighters and with Waldo —but of course— taking the side of the established white-supremacist crackers under General Lincoln.



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"History is the how of now."

— Austin Meredith



*Austin Meredith*



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1994

: James Davidson Hunter's BEFORE THE SHOOTING BEGINS: SEARCHING FOR DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA'S CULTURE WAR (New York: Free Press):



The tragic murders of two more people by pro-life extremists, has reminded me of a book that I read recently that seems to be more and more prophetic as time marches on. He believes that we are in the midst of a great cultural struggle similar to the civil war, and if we don't do a better job of turning down the emotional rhetoric and attempting to engage in civil and rational discourse aimed at achieving truth that we will be heading into a shooting war if we are not already there. When pro life activists begin to see themselves as instruments of God's vengeance and compare themselves to [John Brown](#), we are perhaps already entered our "Bleeding Kansas" that was a precursor of the Civil War.

In this book, Hunter is particularly critical of the liberal/conservative framework that dominates our discourse and seems so incapable of making any progress. Liberals assert the pro choice ethic of moral autonomy and deny the right of the community to determine boundaries of acceptable morality – end of discussion. While conservatives tend to embrace absolute and unbending laws (natural or divine) that must be obeyed – abortion is murder – end of discussion. The debate that does occur is not really debate but "in your face," emotional one-upmanship – the coat hangar vs the mangled fetus and clearly aimed at mobilizing the already committed rather than gentle persuasion.

All of this is to the advantage of permanent activists organizations on both sides of the abortion spectrum who depend upon this fear and polarization in order to keep the money pouring into their coffers. "...let's not forget," wrote Planned Parenthood in a direct mail campaign, "that the antichoice activists won't stop with the destruction of abortion rights. They're also determined to outlaw contraception and to turn back the clock on the fundamental right to privacy guaranteed under the Constitution." Or a one page promotion from the American Life League counters, "Abortion has already killed 25 million preborn babies. How many of our elderly will ultimately be sacrificed to balance the budget." These are both messages of a threatened apocalypse, and like any message of this sort we are forced to choose which side are we on. Which side do we fear the most? Two people sharing essentially the same view on abortion are often driven (as they were in the civil war) into opposing camps because of different fears.

The exciting challenge in all of this is to remind ourselves that we were able to mediate the previous culture war on slavery peacefully by avoiding conservative legalism (the Bible accepts



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slavery – end of discussion) and liberal tolerance (some of our best members are slave owners who will be judged and made to feel second class citizens) and insisting that the community must engage in a long term moral discourse aimed at discerning God's will for us. With the help of John Woolman and others, Friends became convinced that slavery was an evil that corrupted the slaves and the slave owners and that Friends must end this practice or face a judgment from God. If other religious bodies had been able to follow suit perhaps the most costly war in history could have been avoided.

I have long been concerned that we have forsaken our tradition of discernment in approaching the modern cultural struggles like abortion, homosexuality, and euthanasia and adopted the dead end liberal/conservative framework of the world. As a result we are just as polarized as the everyone else. I see some signs in my own yearly meeting (New York Yearly Meeting) and on this list that Friends are genuinely seeking to recover a way of peace. What an exciting thing it would be if Friends were able to lead the way today as we did on slavery. It would mean that we were once again taking up the nonviolent cross of Jesus and witnessing to the peaceful reconciliation for which he died by trusting in his resurrected spirit, the light within, to guide us in the truth.

September: [Timothy McVeigh](#) had resigned from the National Rifle Association because he considered their stance on gun rights and the 2d Amendment to be “too weak.” During the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms siege near Waco, he had asserted “When guns are outlawed, I will become an outlaw.” At this point, with assault weapons being temporarily banned under a new [Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Act](#) enacted as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, he began to identify his attitude toward necessary violence with that of [Captain John Brown](#) in 1859 (what Brown had fought against had been black enslavement — and now, you know, all Americans regardless of color are being gradually enslaved by the Socialism of the growing power of the federal government).

News items relating to the development of ELECTRIC WALDEN technology:

- The International Telecommunications Union ratifies the 28.8Kbps V.34 modem standard.
- Advanced Micro Devices shipped its Am486DX2-80 40/80-MHz processor.
- Microsoft shipped its 1st keyboard, the Microsoft Natural Keyboard, announced the name of its upcoming Windows upgrade (“Windows 95”), and shipped its 1st Internet browser.
- U.S. Robotics shipped the Sportster v.34 28.8Kbps modems. List price: US\$329 internal, US\$349 external.
- NexGen introduced its Nx586 microprocessor.
- Alaris introduced the 1st PC with a NexGen Nx586 processor.
- Sun Microsystems unveiled the 64-bit UltraSPARC RISC processor.
- Digital Equipment Corporation formally introduced its next-generation Alpha AXP processors, including a 300-MHz version that could execute 1 billion instructions per second.
- IBM introduced the Aptiva line, to replace the PS/1 line, aimed at the home PC market.



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1995

April 19, Wednesday: When there was a release of phosgene gas in a train at the main railroad station in Yokohama, Japan, 300 were sent to hospitals.

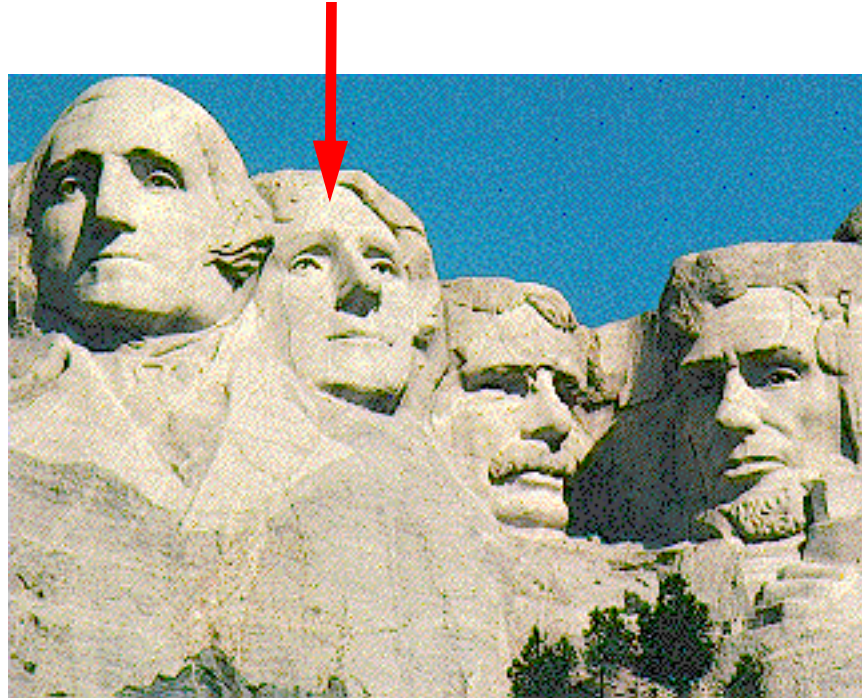
On the 2d anniversary of the [Waco](#) killings (by no coincidence), a truck bomb exploded in downtown Oklahoma City, Oklahoma killing 169 including 19 children, injuring 400, and destroying the 9-story Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. The blast created a crater six meters wide and 2.5 meters deep. 200 other buildings were damaged causing a \$500,000,000 loss. [President William Jefferson Clinton](#) designated the [FBI](#) as lead law enforcement agency in the case. It would turn out that a man who had been taught to kill in the US Army had parked a lovingly constructed truck bomb in front of the building. In the enormous explosion, 168 were killed. [Timothy McVeigh](#) would be arrested while fleeing in a T-shirt bearing an image of President [Thomas Jefferson](#) on the front and a select quote from this man's thoughts on the back: "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants."

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(Jefferson had written that in November 1787 anent a rebellion in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.)

Tim looked quite a bit like this:



Upon arrest, the authorities described McVeigh's apparel in such a manner as to obscure the nature of this reference across his back. A mug shot, taken when he was booked at the jail, was seized by the Bureau and that agency refused to release the photo. McVeigh's attorney of course downplayed the chosen sentiment:

"Well, if Thomas Jefferson said it, I shouldn't think it would be incriminating at all."



"History is the how of now."

— Austin Meredith



*Austin Meredith*





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McVeigh would, however, be convicted and, as a federal prisoner, executed at the federal execution facility in Terre Haute IN. Shortly before execution, according to journalist Dan Herbec, the murderer/terrorist, who had been starving himself so he would seem like a victim martyr, would explicitly cast himself as a modern-day [John Brown](#): “One of his big heroes was John Brown, who committed some very violent acts during the 1800s in the effort to eliminate slavery in our country.”

One piece of the Smithsonian salvage operation suggested by Heyman was an academic conference: “Presenting History: Museums in a Democratic Society,” sponsored by the [Smithsonian Institution](#) and the University of Michigan at the University. announcement and extended summary of the conference “Museums in ID Crisis after ‘[Enola Gay](#),’” by Stephen Cain, Ann Arbor News, 4/16/95, C1 Three flaws in the Smithsonian approach: mixed the scholarly and the celebratory, failure of sensitivity, leading off with the bomb. “Smithsonian Sifts Debris of Enola Gay Plan,” by Eugene L. Meyer, Washington Post 4/20/95, D01

[WORLD WAR II](#)

September: The Washington Post, in conjunction with [The New York Times](#), published the [UNABOM](#) 35,000-word diatribe against technology “Industrial Society and its Future” (the author was identifying himself as “FC”). Here’s a highlight:

The system does not and cannot exist to satisfy human needs. Instead, it is human behavior that has to be modified to fit the needs of the system. When skilled workers are put out of a job by technical advances and have to undergo "retraining," no one asks whether it is humiliating for them to be pushed around in this way. It is simply taken for granted that everyone must bow to technical necessity and for good reason: If human needs were put before technical necessity there would be economic problems, unemployment, shortages or worse. The concept of "mental health" in our society is defined largely by the extent to which an individual behaves in accord with the needs of the system and does so without showing signs of stress.

(Uh, OK. [Ted](#), are you sure you really needed to kill people in order to be able to say stuff like this?)

In recorded interviews with his attorney Stephen Jones, [Timothy McVeigh](#) described his thinking during and after his April 19, 1995 Oklahoma City explosion, killed 168 people, including the 19 children in a day school just inside the front door of the federal building. He reminisced that he “could have gotten away clean [but] determined that the best way would be to continue on as the [Paul Revere](#) type messenger instead of the [John Brown](#) type revolutionary, that you could accomplish maybe two in one.”

News items relating to the development of ELECTRIC WALDEN technology:

- Diamond Multimedia Systems acquires modem maker Supra, for cash and stock worth US\$54 million.
- AT&T shuts down NCR, at a cost of US\$1.2 billion.
- IBM introduced the Aptiva PC.
- Intel announced the official name for the P6 chip: Pentium Pro.
- Two groups of companies agree on a proposed high density compact disc format. The new format would allow up to 18.8 gigabytes total on a double-sided disc.



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- One month after the release of Windows 95, an estimated 7 million copies had been sold to end-users.
- Six months after its release, 30,000 units of Microsoft's Bob had been sold.
- Intel introduced the 83-MHz Pentium OverDrive processor, for replacement in 33-MHz 486DX and 486DX2/66 systems. Price: US\$300.
- Novell sold UnixWare and the rights to the UNIX operating system to Santa Cruz Operations for US\$145 million.
- Intel announced the 80486SXSF and GXSF 486 microprocessors, designed for hand held computer products. The GX had a 16-bit bus, the SX a 32-bit bus. Both were 33-MHz, operating on 2.0-3.3 volts.
- AT&T spins off its computer subsidiary (formerly NCR) as AT&T Global Information Solutions.
- The 1st live radio broadcast over the internet, a sports program put out by Broadcast.com.



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1997

Maggie Jaffe's "Thoreau & Capt. John Brown" from HOW THE WEST WAS ONE:

### Thoreau & Capt. John Brown

Among other things,  
he had the guts to say No!  
when King Cotton had "dollars-  
&-sense" Yankees by the balls.  
When northern mills ground  
up workers, hoarding Capital  
to buy more slave ships:  
Jesus, Friendship, Mercy.  
About John Brown he wrote:  
Don't measure him in your accountant's ledger.  
He gave all to debased slaves  
not for power or for cash,  
but out of principle.  
In the few years before Thoreau's death  
at 45, he gave it up, made cribbed  
observations in his notebook:  
this rock, that arrow head, a yellowed leaf.<sup>136</sup>  
His "Resistance to Civil Government"  
was read more ardently a century  
later than when it was written:  
in southern prisons, on the White House lawn,  
in the defoliated jungles of southeast Asia.

HENRY THOREAU

TIMELINE OF ESSAYS

JOHN BROWN

RESISTANCE TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT

June 13, Friday: Attorneys in the [UNABOM](#) case offered that to avoid problems in jury selection the judge should refuse the media access to certain inflammatory pieces of evidence such as portions of suspect [Theodore John Kaczynski](#)'s coded diary.

In a federal court in Denver, [Timothy McVeigh](#) was sentenced to death for his part in the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995. McVeigh would, as a federal prisoner, after being held in "Supermax" in Colorado, be executed at the federal execution facility in Terre Haute, Indiana. Shortly before execution, according to journalist Dan Herbec, the murderer/terrorist, who had been starving himself so he would seem like a victim martyr, would explicitly cast himself as a modern-day abolitionist: "One of his big heroes was [John Brown](#), who committed some very violent acts during the 1800s in the effort to eliminate slavery in our country."

Two popular music entertainers from the group "Naughty by Nature" were charged in New York with illegal gun possession, and reckless driving.

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136. We may note, at this point in the poem, the impact of a particular theory of Thoreau's maturity put forward forcefully by selective quotation in the popular press by Professor Walter Harding — that Thoreau in later years became wearily disillusioned and dissatisfied and burnt out, and was more and more distressingly preoccupied with mere detail.



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2001

June 11, Monday: At 7:14AM local time at the federal execution facility in Terre Haute, Indiana, the murderer/terrorist [Timothy McVeigh](#) was pronounced dead. He had made no final statement, preparing instead a handwritten copy of the poem “Invictus” (the word is Latin, and means, as in the 4th line of the poem, “unconquerable”), which had been written by the one-legged William Ernest Henley and first published in 1875. However, shortly before execution, according to journalist Dan Herbec, McVeigh had in conversation explicitly cast himself as a modern-day [John Brown](#): “One of his big heroes was John Brown, who committed some very violent acts during the 1800s in the effort to eliminate slavery in our country.”

### Invictus

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate;  
I am the captain of my soul.



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2005

April 25, Monday: A new biography of Captain [John Brown](#) was reviewed in [The New Yorker](#) by Adam Gopnik:

### JOHN BROWNS BODY

#### A new biography restores Brown's centrality to the Civil War.

"Weird John Brown," Melville called him, in a weirdly contemporary locution, and for a long time he was shuffled to the edges of American weirdness, among the staring-mad homicidal nuts and assassins. In the past several years, though, history, or at least some historians, has become kinder, and even reverent. Long before he led the botched and bloody anti-slavery raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in 1859, Brown, we are taught, was a moral visionary and a man of uncanny courage and integrity. Every one of his central moral convictions and most of his peripheral ones, too, have been vindicated by history. He was a dedicated feminist, who had his sons do the housework on terms of equality with his daughters; he was a farmer who had gentle and respectful relations with neighboring Native Americans,<sup>137</sup> so that, even before he became famous as the fighting fury of abolition, they liked and respected him. Above all, he was convinced, throughout the eighteen-forties and fifties—a time when even most abolitionists were prepared to wring their hands and tolerate slavery if it could be limited in scale—that the practice of holding men, women, and children as property was an absolute evil, that it had, at all costs, to end, and that the race who had been enslaved were not merely to be pitied but to be respected and armed, as citizens and fellow-soldiers. Far from being an incoherent fanatic, he was an eloquent speaker and writer, who composed an entire alternative Constitution, one reflecting egalitarian values that did not become commonplace until our own time.

He was also, as even an admiring historian cannot deny, a man of violence and, by almost any definition, what we would now call a terrorist—a man who believed that the government of the United States should be met with violence because it supported and perpetuated oppression. He believed that there were no distinctions to be made between innocent and guilty in a society determined to perpetuate an evil. "It is better that a whole generation of men, women, and children should pass away by a violent death" than that slavery should live, he declared. He led his sons out into the fields of Kansas at night to massacre unarmed men while their families listened, and insisted afterward that he had been right to do it: that where legislation

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137. One can take issue with a whole lot of this. For instance, where did this stuff about the farmer Brown having "neighboring Native Americans" come from? The neighbors at the Brown farm in North Ebola, New York, with whom Brown had gentle and respectful relations, were definitely free blacks rather than red Indians.



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and compromise had failed only violence would succeed. He is the man who made Lincoln possible, and the acknowledged spiritual patron of [Timothy McVeigh](#).<sup>138</sup>

Russell Banks's fine novel *CLOUDSPLITTER* (1998) helped reimagine Brown for our time as a flawed hero, and it was followed by the Harvard scholar John Stauffer's *THE BLACK HEARTS OF MEN* (2002), which reestablished Brown as a serious political thinker, and, last year, by Franny Nudelman's *JOHN BROWN'S BODY*, which explained the enormous role of Brown's martyrdom in the visual and literary rhetoric of the Civil War. In a different, sharper key, George MacDonald Fraser devoted his 1994 "Flashman" novel, *FLASHMAN AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD*, to an account of Harry's involvement with Brown and Harpers Ferry, and produced what is, for the Flashman series, a surprisingly admiring portrait. Now we have a full-fledged five-hundred-page biography: "JOHN BROWN, ABOLITIONIST," by David S. Reynolds (Knopf; \$35). Reynolds's book is a defense of Brown, whom he, too, believes to have been slighted by a history written by the winners with an eye to consoling the losers. He sees Brown as a visionary prophet of American equality, whose sins and crimes, though real, have to be situated in the bloody context of the run-up to the Civil War. Mainly, he wants to restore Brown's centrality to the Civil War, and he does. By writing John Brown out as an oddity or sideshow, he insists, we miss the essential reality of the war: what was unthinkable and extremist in 1859—the armed descent of the North on the South to end slavery—had by 1864 become a mass movement, so that the war could be understood as what Lincoln called "a John Brown raid, on a gigantic scale." Brown is the first mover in the American tragedy, the man who struck the bell and struck it hard. Reynolds's book isn't beautifully written, and his defense of Brown can be uncomfortably apologetic, but almost every page forces you to think hard, and in new ways, about American violence, American history, and what used to be called the American character.

John Brown was born with his century, in Torrington, Connecticut. His father, Owen Brown, was a Yankee tanner, and a hard, cold Calvinist of the very old American school. William T. Vollmann, in his dense study of the types of violence, "Rising Up and Rising Down," tries to place Brown within a general practice of personal violence and expiation through discipline. Brown's father, a man of rectitude, beat him regularly, and Brown, in turn, beat his children, making them strike their father as often as their father struck them, but surely this kind of punishment was common in the brutal domestic life of the time. Nor is young Brown's subsequent history of failed careers, in tanning and farming and real-estate speculation, quite as

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138. When [Timothy McVeigh](#) was arrested after the Oklahoma City bombing the police photos reveal that he was arrested in his favorite T-shirt, one which celebrated the bloody attitudes of Thomas Jefferson. One might say that President Jefferson, therefore, rather than Captain John Brown, was "the acknowledged spiritual patron of Timothy McVeigh." To speak of McVeigh as holding John Brown as his "spiritual patron" might be taken to imply that Timothy like John Brown respected black people, and tried to help them, yet I know of no evidence that Timothy liked any black people, or tried to help them.



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unusual for the pre-Civil War period as some have tried to make it, in an effort to create an aura of embittered resentment around the man. A figure as different as John James Audubon went up the same Calvary of failed minor capitalisms before he found himself.

Brown was unusual, perhaps, in his fecundity—he eventually had twenty children by two wives, the first of whom died, predictably, of childbed fever—and in his passionate devotion to his family; he seems to have been so ideal a father that three of his sons followed him to their deaths in his crusades. (Perhaps even more extraordinary, the sons who didn't want to join him he treated tenderly.) In his own time, he gave off a sense of being a man of some other, a throwback. With a classic American Puritan's addiction to Scripture, he was more a man of the Old Testament than the New, a prophet and avenger, a Joshua rather than a Jesus. He had a particularly bad case of the old New England identification of the Puritans with the Jews, as the armed and chosen people. (Brown was, in his broad-mindedness, philo-Semitic.) But he was also a resolute roundhead, an admirer of Oliver Cromwell, and one of Reynolds's accomplishments is to help us see how the figure of Cromwell—the common man who read his Bible, and who killed a king—haunted the period and Brown's actions.

What's still difficult to explain about Brown is just why he turned so hard against slavery. His father was an anti-slavery zealot, though not an activist, but the son absorbed the creed of abolition with an intensity and a sense of personal wrong that were unequalled among the white men of his time. The legend has Brown, at the age of twelve, seeing a slave boy being beaten, and swearing, then and there, to "declare, or Swear: Eternal War with Slavery." True or not, the story has two elements that are typical of Brown's passionate form of abolition: it was intensely personal, and it involved an empathy, rather than patronizing sympathy, with the sufferings of black people.

Brown turned to radical abolitionism, and to violence, only in the eighteen-thirties. In retrospect, it is the great dividing decade, as crucial as the nineteen-sixties in the next century. As the essayist John Jay Chapman observed in 1913, "Between 1830 and 1835, the element of passion was rising past the danger point, and running into something like insanity in the Southern mind." The decade began with Nat Turner's slave revolt, and its brutal suppression, and so it also marked the moment when the generally benevolent Jeffersonian view of slavery—an evil that would pass with the development of the region—became replaced in the South by various nascent forms of ideological racism: blacks were not an unlucky race, not yet quite ready for emancipation, but a subhuman one, whose only hope for salvation lay in being kept in slave labor; the evil would never pass, because it wasn't an evil. The new, openly racist ideology produced an uncompromising form of abolitionism in the North, under the leadership of William Lloyd Garrison, the white [Martin](#)



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Luther King, Jr., whose great words of 1829 opened the decade: "Before God I must say that such a glaring contradiction as exists between our creed and practice, the annals of six thousand years cannot parallel. In view of it, I am ashamed of my country."

But Garrison, like Dr. King, was a pacifist, and, right up to the moment when the war broke out, he had no really practical plan for ending slavery, aside from "separation" (i.e., the decoupling of the North from the South) and moral suasion. John Brown's insight, from the beginning, was that slavery would end only if someone ended it. Sometime in the eighteen-forties, he had conceived a plan to create an army of emancipation in the South, which would hide in the mountains and grow by leaps and defections until the institution of slavery ultimately collapsed. Apart from the grandiosity of his long-range scheme, Brown differed from the mainstream of Northern abolitionism in his peculiar affinity with the South—both with the blacks he wanted to help liberate and with the slaveholders he wanted to destroy. Where Garrison, though utterly passionate and courageous in his denunciations, was a thorough man of the North, with lawyerly-journalistic gifts of argument and irony, Brown was a man of romantic feeling. Stauffer's book documents Brown's deep sense of identification with and admiration for black culture. In a way that did not recur in American life until the radicals of the nineteen-sixties stood in awe of H. Rap Brown, he wanted to be black—to look black and think black and act black. (He may even have had his skin darkened in photographs to try to pass, in the opposite direction.)<sup>139</sup>

At the same time, Brown—along with certain radical characters of the black abolitionist movement—shared with the slaveowners a romantic ideology of personal honor through violence. "Our white brethren cannot understand us unless we speak to them in their own language; they recognize only force," Brown's friend the black radical James McCune Smith wrote, using words that no Garrisonian abolitionist would have trusted but which Brown grasped and admired. "They will never recognize our manhood until we knock them down a time or two; they will then hug us as men and brethren."

One need only compare Brown's attitudes with those of the other key voices of the decade to see how important this difference was. Abraham Lincoln, in the eighteen-thirties, was grappling with the same realities—the explosions of violence centered on the anti-slavery disputes—but, in his first important speech, to the Springfield Young Men's Lyceum in 1838, he took a radical position against the Southern cult of honor and redemption through violence. Lincoln insisted that salvation for America lay only in extreme proceduralism: "Passion has helped us, but

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139. This idea that Captain John Brown may have had his skin darkened in photographs so that he could pass as a person of color — this is the first I've heard of such an idea, and I wonder what evidence there might be for this. Is there evidence that Brown had Daguerreotypes made of himself that would specifically make his skin seem dark? In particular, in the photo that is now in the collection of the Library of Congress, I can detect no attempt to appear as a colored man rather than a white man.





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can do so no more. It will in future be our enemy. Reason, cold calculating, unimpassioned reason, must furnish all the materials for our future support and defense."

It is hard now to grasp the cultural authority that the code of passionate honor—with its elaborate rituals of feuds and duels—seemed to give the South in that period. Not merely the political edge but the poetic priority seemed to lie with the feudal and honorable South against the commercial and mouthy North. (It was a cultural advantage that persisted right up through, and perhaps beyond, the Atlanta première of "Gone with the Wind.") Brown, though, understood it because he felt it. He set out, in effect, not to convert the South to Northern values but to convert the Northern abolitionists to the Southern codes of honorable violence. He was a virus that was to prove deadly to the Old South, because at some deep level he shared its DNA: its assumptions, its literature, and even some of its values—particularly the value of dying heroically for a cause over living honorably for one, and the companion value of forcing other people to die heroically for their cause, whether they quite wanted to or not.

Brown's acceptance of this feudal ethic forms the general background to his murderous night in Kansas on May 24, 1856. Brown was brought to Kansas by his sons, who had learned their father's creed by heart. "We must show by actual work that there are two sides to this thing and that they can not go on with this impunity," Brown declared, after watching his fellow-abolitionists quake and tremble in the face of violent pro-slave mobs. He assembled a party of activists, including four of his sons and a son-in-law, armed them with swords, and marched them toward the little settlement of Pottawatomie Creek. Brown had his men bang on the doors of pro-slavery households, pretending to be lost travellers in order to get the men outside. There he ordered them cut to pieces, watching impassively as his sons and other followers did the work. (He seems to have executed one man, James Doyle, himself.) Five men were murdered in this manner.

Reynolds, without wanting to excuse it, goes to great lengths to set the Pottawatomie massacre in its context—pro-slavery thugs had been routinely beating and intimidating and killing anti-slavery activists, and, until then, the anti-slavery side had seemed too timid or frightened to defend itself. Yet Brown's motives for this act remain murky. The psychiatrist James Gilligan has argued that acts of violence are always rooted in feelings of shame and humiliation that can be expiated only by the destruction of someone who was a witness, in some sense, to one's shame. Brown in Kansas at first might seem to be without this cue to action—he was neither implicated nor particularly humiliated by the vigilantes—until one realizes that the real trigger was something that had happened two days before in Washington. There, as Reynolds reminds us, a South Carolina congressman had beaten Senator Charles Sumner, of Massachusetts,



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nearly to death<sup>140</sup> with the gold head of his cane<sup>141</sup> for daring to speak out against the pro-slavery forces in Kansas<sup>142</sup> and, in a feudal manner, for criticizing a kinsman of his. Sumner, though no pacifist, had been unable to defend himself. (His feet seem to have got caught under his little desk.)

This assault was put forward, instantly, as crowning proof of the difference between the Southern honor culture and the Northern procedural one; a Northerner could talk trash, but he couldn't stand up for himself. Brown, one of his sons said, "went crazy – crazy. It seemed to be the finishing, decisive touch." It was not a cool evaluation of the potential uses of violence in Kansas but the transferred sense of humiliation that he felt on behalf of Sumner that drove Brown crazy and into the massacre. Brown emerged from the massacre not bloodstained but magnified in the eyes of his enemies. Before, the anti-slavery forces had had only contempt for the abolitionists. Now they were scared to death of John Brown. He was able to win a minor skirmish with government forces who were out to get him simply through the fear his name invoked.

Brown did not claim particular glory for the Pottawatomie massacre but he did not cover it up, either. What makes him a typically American idealist is not his lust for killing—he was eager to avoid murder if he could—but his indifference to human life lost on the way toward his ideal. Like our current idealists in power, he didn't want to kill, but he didn't want to count the dead he did kill, either. He shrugged off the dead men in the dirt, even as one of his sons went mad at the memory.

Brown was never arrested or tried for the Kansas killings, and when he came back East he found himself a hero—though not with the members of Garrison's abolitionist "establishment," who were firmly pacifist and consumed by their own sectarian squabbling.

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140. If a person is beaten and then dies, we can say they were beaten to death. Some of our prisoners, for instance, in Iraq and in Afghanistan, have been beaten to death by the US soldiers who were guarding them. If, however, a person is beaten and then does not die, it is to a certain extent hyperbole to say that they were "nearly" beaten to death. There is at least one biographer of Senator Charles Sumner who suggests that, to the contrary, Sumner exaggerated the extent of his injuries for political and personal advantage.

141. The idea that Congressman Preston Smith Brooks was incensed because Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts had "criticized a kinsman of his" is a tendentiously simplistic presentation of what had happened. Senator Andrew Pickens Butler of South Carolina, one of Congressman Preston Smith Brooks's uncles, had had a stroke which had left him with a speech impediment, and Senator Sumner had several times mocked this physical disability, describing his colleague's speech not only as "incoherent phrases" but also as "loose exhortation." This unseemly derogation of a speech impediment might alone have been enough, but Sumner also had described Congressman Brooks's uncle as taking "a mistress ... who, though ugly to others, is always lovely to him; though polluted in the sight of the world, is chaste in his sight — I mean, the harlot, Slavery," and this was of course uncomfortably close to describing the uncle as consorting sexually in public with a black prostitute. Now, as for the gutta percha walking cane, Congressman Brooks, badly wounded in a duel, had become a cripple and relied on the cane in order to walk (a year later he would be dead). Brooks did thrash Sumner with the gutta percha shaft of his cane until it snapped, but I know of no-one who has ever suggested that he had used the cane as a club, to beat Sumner with its gold knob — that certainly was not the sort of attack that was depicted in the contemporary newspaper illustrations, which depict Brooks as holding the cane by its head and lashing at Sumner with its shaft. (So what I get from this "with the gold head of his cane" stuff is that Adam Gopnik must be the sort of popular scholar, or creative magazine writer, who simply makes stuff up as he goes along.)

142. Sorry, I very much doubt that anyone would ever have criticized a US Senator for daring to speak out for or against the pro-slavery forces in Kansas, or for or against the anti-slavery forces in Kansas. Speaking out in such manner is exactly what senators are supposed to do, and everyone understands and appreciates that no matter what side of the aisle they sit on.



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Instead, it was the high Transcendentalists, Thoreau and Emerson and Alcott first among them, who became Brown's fervent admirers and propagandists. Some of Reynolds's most illuminating pages are devoted to Brown's relationship to the Transcendentalists. The historical cliché has been that the Transcendentalists had their heads too far up in the clouds to see what was happening on the bloody earth below. Reynolds, however, following Stauffer, establishes that they were Brown's most important intellectual allies.

In a way, it was an early instance of radical chic: the Transcendentalists preferred a real man to a squabbling set of Mrs. Jellybys. But there was more to it. They shared a disdain for materialist Northern society—which Brown had bankrupted himself out of, and which the Transcendentalists viewed largely with baffled dismay. Whatever else Brown might be, he was not a trivial man, or a worldly one: he was not a merchant with a Sunday cause. He was a free man already in a state of liberty. In a way that recalls the idealization of Jean Genet by the French existentialists, it was his own freedom from constraints, as much as his urge to break the shackles of others, that drew the Transcendentalists to him.

He received the backing of a group of wealthy abolitionists who called themselves the Secret Six, though a less secret secret group is hard to imagine. They included Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the man who was later Emily Dickinson's patron. (Reynolds has some fascinating speculative pages on traces of Brown's life in Dickinson's poetry, one essentially fanatic American imagination speaking to another.) From that time on, Brown was devoted to fund-raising and recruiting for his Southern invasion plan, which soon centered on the Federal Arsenal at Harpers Ferry. The plan was hardly well concealed; at some point, it was placed in the hands, through an anonymous letter, of the Secretary of War, John B. Floyd, who, in the great tradition of American counter-terrorism, shrugged and threw it aside.

Brown brought in the black abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass,<sup>143</sup> who took a look at the plan and refused to have anything to do with it, since it was obviously a blueprint for failure and the mass executions of blacks. The plan was, to say the least, quixotic: Brown would descend with a handpicked raiding party, take weapons from the arsenal, arm the slaves of Harpers Ferry—with pikes, in a deliberately archaic and Cromwellian touch—and then take to the Appalachian Mountains to begin a permanent guerrilla insurrection, fed by regular recruitments of escaped slaves.

At one level, it was not nearly so crazy as it looked: a slave insurrection had succeeded in Haiti almost within living memory, and Brown's plan remained a successful model for Latin-American

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143. This conceit that Brown the originator brought in Douglass the passive recipient, rather than Douglass bringing in Brown, is belied by the fact that the entire Harpers Ferry scheme had originally been fulminated in Douglass's home in Rochester, New York.



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guerrillas into our own time, right down to the mélange of outside agitators and local agrarian rebels. At another level, though, it was even crazier than it sounded: Brown, as Douglass recognized, had done no serious advance work with the local slaves, and the blacks of Northern Virginia (what we would now call West Virginia) were, generally, not the kind of plantation slaves who were likely to rebel but house and field servants, who could not be expected to bond with an unknown white man with a flowing beard who handed them a pike and told them to kill somebody and run for the hills.

For two years, Brown went on planning, buying guns and pikes, feuding with a proposed second-in-command, and travelling to Canada to form a provisional government, with a black President and Vice-President. He drew up a multiracial Constitution made for a post-Harpers Ferry America – a Constitution meant for “the proscribed and oppressed races of the United States ... together with all minor children of such persons.” (It included an article against “filthy conversation.”) Reading through accounts of life on the Brown farm, in upstate New York, where all this was centered, you think, They weren’t serious. But they were. On October 16, 1859, Brown, two of his sons, and eighteen colleagues, white and black, descended on Harpers Ferry and took hostage about thirty-five people who happened to be near the arsenal (and all of whom he treated with great consideration). They shot a couple of bystanders – including a freed black and the generally well-liked mayor of the town. The slaves were armed and then, for the most part, looked around wondering what to do.<sup>144</sup>

There was a moment when the operation might have been salvaged, if Brown had moved quickly and headed for the mountains with the few slaves who had joined him. Instead, petulantly disappointed that the great slave uprising hadn’t begun instantly upon his arrival, he sent out for breakfast for his hostages and barricaded himself inside. By the following night, the arsenal had been surrounded by federal troops—led, with almost unbelievable serendipity, by Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee, then of the U.S. Army, and his lieutenant, J.E.B. Stuart—and several of Brown’s men had been killed, including his son Oliver. Brown still refused to surrender, the federals rushed the arsenal, and Brown was stabbed in the side and slashed around the head.

It was what happened immediately afterward that made Brown’s reputation as a martyr and prophet. Transported to the arsenal guardhouse, Brown, bleeding from his head wound, calmly faced down his captors through the next twenty-four hours, arguing his case and, on the whole, shaming what remained of their moral conscience. With the insouciant openness that was until quite recently a feature of American life—Oswald, let’s recall, gave

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144. Why don’t I know anything about these local slaves who supposedly were armed by John Brown and then, for the most part, looked around wondering what to do? How many of them were there? Where did he round them up? Where did he station them? Did he arm them with rifles, or pikes?



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a press conference on the night of the Kennedy assassination—dignitaries and reporters and even artists for publications, North and South, rushed in to interview him. The governor of Virginia, Henry A. Wise, sat in, as did Lee and Stuart.

Horribly wounded, expected to die, his son dead alongside him, Brown kept his cool and his words. He observed that he could have fled but didn't out of concern for his hostages. ("I had thirty odd prisoners, whose wives and daughters were in tears for their safety, and I felt for them.") Pressed on the great question, he said, simply, "I think, my friend, you are guilty of a great wrong to God and against humanity—I say it without wishing to be offensive—and I believe it would be perfectly right to interfere with you, so far as to free those you wickedly and willfully hold in bondage." When Jeb Stuart warned, sententiously, "The wages of sin is death," Brown turned on him: "I would not have said that if you had been a prisoner and wounded in my hands." And then he spoke plain truth: "You had better—all of you people of the South—prepare yourselves for a settlement of this question. You may dispose of me very easily—I am nearly disposed of now. But this question is still to be settled."

And they listened, recognizing the dignity and courage of the old man who was speaking. Governor Wise went back to Richmond and called him "a bundle of the best nerves I ever saw, cut and thrust and bleeding and in bonds. He is a man of clear head, of courage, fortitude, and simple ingenuousness. He is cool, collected, and indomitable ... fanatic, vain, and garrulous, but firm, truthful, and intelligent." Another pro-slavery politician called him "as brave and resolute a man as ever headed an insurrection, and, in a good cause, and with a sufficient force, would have been a consummate partisan commander." It was, as Reynolds says, praise for a Southern gentleman, coming from others.

Brown triumphed rhetorically and, in the end, effectively at Harpers Ferry, because the slaveholder's code of honor, though in many ways a scandal, was not entirely a sham. His enemies were not demons, though they served a cause in many ways demonic. They did not treat him as subhuman; they did not torture him to death instantly, or lynch him, as they might well have done had he been black. They were impressed by his grasp of the code of honor, of courage in combat, and of fearlessness in the face of death and one's enemies, and they honored him accordingly. Even his trial, though "fixed" at some level, was open and offered at least the formalities of fairness.

Mark Twain understood how this worked better than anyone. He never tired of attacking the Sir Walter Scott-inspired honor cult of the South, and in the feud of the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons in "Huckleberry Finn" he gave memorable form to its nihilistic absurdity. But he also understood the moral force that the code gave to individuals: in the same novel, the moment when the solitary, aristocratic Colonel Sherburn faces down a



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lynch mob alone is, as Twain imagines it, a distinctly Southern scene. Even Garrison, a man of unexampled courage, could not face down a mob in Boston but had to be saved by the police. And, in a last irony, it was the language that the slaveowners of the South used about John Brown that provided a template for the way the North, five years later, would talk about the defeated Stuart and Lee: brave and resolute insurrectionists, they should only have been leaders in a better cause. Brown's first night in captivity established the rhetorical terms on which those fighting the war would try to deal with the humanity of their enemies. Even the courage with which Brown went to his execution, on December 2nd, reinforced the code. The man who made the Northern cause an armed cause, he was, in a certain sense, the first casualty of the South.

Terrorism is an autoimmune disease; its purpose is to cause harm by provoking an overreaction. This is exactly what happened after Brown's failure. A rational Southern observer would have seen that the raid was a sign of the fundamental weakness of abolitionism as an armed cause and, with a bit of wisdom, would have seized the chance to do something before it became a stronger one. Of course, just the opposite happened: panic about slave revolts and further abolitionist raids set in throughout the South. Even in distant Mississippi and far-off Georgia, the paranoia became rampant, and, Reynolds shows, it was this atmosphere of panic and paranoia, along with the election of the still ostensibly anti-abolitionist Lincoln, that produced secession and, with it, the arming of the North and the war.

Was there any other way to "settle the question"? Absent a credible plan originating anywhere in the South for black emancipation on any terms at all—even on a delayed basis that admitted the obscene right of property—there probably wasn't. One anti-Brown argument, repeated even today, was that slavery was on its way out and would have ended in any case, under the sheer historical inexorability of commercial change, industrialization, the impossibility of maintaining a slave system in a fully capitalist economy, and so on. But nothing in history is less inexorable than the inexorable forces of history. Systems inherently rotten and unsustainable can go on for millennia (witness the last few hundred years of the Ottoman Empire). The reassurance that in the long run slavery would have ended by itself puts one in mind of the famous voice-over in Stanley Kubrick's "Spartacus," where, despite the crucifixion of Kirk Douglas and his followers, we are told that Spartacus' revolt signalled the beginning of the end of slavery—with only an aside to remind us that it would take another two thousand years. In the very long run, even the best moral arguments get their force from the readiness of men to kill and die for them. That the very long run can sometimes become much shorter than anyone had ever imagined is one more message from John Brown's ghost.



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May: Christopher Hitchens reviewed David S. Reynolds's [JOHN BROWN](#), ABOLITIONIST: THE MAN WHO KILLED SLAVERY, SPARKED THE CIVIL WAR, AND SEEDED CIVIL RIGHTS (Knopf) in [The Atlantic](#). Here are excerpts:

### **The Man Who Ended Slavery**

Slandered by craven abolitionists as unhinged, John Brown was in fact an eloquent, cool-headed tactician who succeeded in his long-range plan: launching a civil war

**by Christopher Hitchens**

When Abraham Lincoln gave an audience to Harriet Beecher Stowe, he is supposed to have greeted her by saying that she was the little woman who had started this great war. That fondly related anecdote illustrates the persistent tendency to Parson Weemsishness in our culture. It was not at all the tear-jerking sentiment of Uncle Tom's Cabin that catalyzed the War Between the States. It was, rather, the blood-spilling intransigence of John Brown, field-tested on the pitiless Kansas prairies and later deployed at Harpers Ferry. And John Brown was a man whom Lincoln assiduously disowned, until the time came when he himself was compelled to adopt the policy of "war to the knife, and the knife to the hilt," as partisans of the slaveocracy had hitherto been too proud of saying.

David Reynolds sets himself to counter several misapprehensions about the pious old buzzard (Brown, I mean, not Lincoln). Among these are the impressions that he was a madman, that he was a homicidal type, and that his assault on a federal arsenal was foredoomed and quixotic. The critical thing here is context. And the author succeeds admirably in showing that Brown, far from being a crazed fanatic, was a serious legatee of the English and American revolutions who anticipated the Emancipation Proclamation and all that has ensued from it.

Until 1850, perhaps, the "peculiar institution" of slavery might have had a chance of perpetuating itself indefinitely by compromise. But the exorbitance and arrogance of "the slave power" forbade this accommodation. Not content with preserving their own domain in its southeastern redoubt, the future Confederates insisted on extending their chattel system into new territories, and on implicating the entire Union in their system. The special symbol of this hubris was the Fugitive Slave Act, which legalized the recovery of human property from "free" states. The idea of secession or separation first arose among abolitionists confronted with this monstrous imposition. Men like William Lloyd Garrison took their text from the Book of Isaiah, describing the U.S. Constitution as a "covenant with death and an agreement with hell," and exhorting their supporters to "come out now and be separate." (This hermeneutic rejectionism, incidentally, is identical to that preached today by Ian Paisley and the Presbyterian hard-liners of Northern Ireland.)

The proto-libertarian and anarchist Lysander Spooner argued that nowhere did the Constitution explicitly endorse slavery. It was



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for defenders of the values of 1776 and 1789 to help the slaves overthrow an illegitimate tyranny. In this he had the support of the Republican Frederick Douglass, who also wanted the United States to live up to its founding documents rather than to nullify or negate them. Meanwhile, the Democrats were unashamed advocates of the extension of slavery, and Lincoln was willing to submit to one humiliation after another in order, as he never tired of saying, "to preserve the Union."

John Brown could effortlessly outdo Garrison in any biblical condemnation of slavery. He could also easily surpass Lysander Spooner in his zeal to encourage and arm what the authorities called "servile insurrection." He strongly agreed with Douglass that the Union should be preserved and not dissolved. But he was incapable of drawing up any balance sheet between "preservation" and gradual emancipation, because he saw quite plainly that the balance was going the other way, and that the slave power was influencing and subordinating the North, rather than the other way about. Thus, despite his commitment to the Union, he was quite ready to regard the federal government as an enemy.

Originally a New Englander (and possibly a Mayflower descendant), Brown appeared to adopt and exemplify the adamant Calvinism of [Jonathan Edwards](#), with his strict insistence on predestination and the "elect" and his vivid belief in eternal punishment for sinners. Reynolds gives some hair-raising examples of the culture of corporal punishment and cruel austerity that ruled Brown's own upbringing and the raising of his twenty children, and it is easy to see how such a combination of dogma and discipline might have given rise to the persistent rumor that he was partly unhinged (more than one of his sons became mentally disturbed). However, the story of his longer evolution makes this speculation a highly unsafe one.

For all his attachment to Calvinist orthodoxy, Brown felt himself very close to the transcendental school of Emerson and Thoreau. He formed important friendships in this circle, and relied on a "Secret Six" committee of supporters in Massachusetts, who stood ready to provide money and even weapons for his projects. He can hardly have been unaware of the religious heterodoxy of this group; and when it came to the no less critical matter of choosing his immediate entourage of radical would-be guerrillas, he readily included Jews, Indians, Paine-ite deists, and agnostics. Most of all, however, he insisted on including blacks. This at once distinguished him from most abolitionists, who preferred to act "for" the slaves rather than with them. But Brown had made a friendship with a slave boy at the age of twelve, and would appear to have undergone a Huck Finn-like experience in the recognition of a common humanity. Later he studied the life and tactics of Nat Turner, and of the rebellious Haitian Toussaint L'Ouverture, and decided that a full-scale revolt of the oppressed, rather than any emancipation from above, was the need of the hour.

I was very much interested to learn that his other great hero





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was Oliver Cromwell, whose "New Model Army" had swept away profane kingship in England and established a Puritan regime. The revisionist view of Cromwell as a liberator rather than a regicide was the work of Thomas Carlyle in the 1840s, and a result of Carlyle's friendship with Emerson. The American writer Joel Tyler Headley "recycled" Carlyle, as Reynolds phrases it, for the American mass market, portraying Cromwell as an ancestor of the American Revolution as well as a synthesizer of "religion, republicanism, and violence." (It seems probable that Brown got his introduction to Cromwell from Headley rather than directly from Carlyle: I cannot easily imagine him esteeming the Carlyle who apostatized from Calvinism, let alone the Carlyle who, in justifying slavery in the West Indies in 1850, published "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question." Reynolds does not discuss this awkward paradox.)

Reynolds focuses on the three most sanguinary and dramatic episodes in Brown's career: the engagements at Pottawatomie and Osawatomie, in Kansas, and the culminating battle at Harpers Ferry. To read this extended account is to appreciate that Brown, far from being easily incited to rage and rashness, was capable of playing a very long game. He was naturally drawn to Kansas, because it had become the battleground state in a Union that was half slave and half free. The pro-slavery settlers and infiltrators from Missouri were determined to colonize the territory and to pack its polling booths, and in this they often had the indulgence of decrepit and cowardly presidents, including Franklin Pierce. Until the appearance of Brown and his men on the scene, the slave power had had things mostly its own way, and was accustomed to using any method it saw fit. After the murder of the abolitionist editor Elijah Lovejoy, and especially after the famous assault on Senator Charles Sumner by Representative Preston Brooks, Brown decided on a reprisal raid, and slew several leading pro-slavery Kansans in the dead of night. There is no question that this represented only a small installment of payback, though Reynolds nervously characterizes it as "terrorism" and spends a great deal of time and ink in partly rationalizing the deed.

The superfluity of this is easily demonstrated. Not only had the slaveholders perpetrated the preponderance of atrocities, and with impunity at that, but they had begun to boast that northerners and New Englanders were congenitally soft and altogether lacking in "chivalric" and soldierly qualities. What could be more apt than that they should encounter John Brown, careless of his own safety and determined to fill the ungodly with the fear of the risen Christ? Every Cavalier should meet such a Roundhead. After Pottawatomie the swagger went out of the southerners, and after the more conventional fighting at Osawatomie, and Brown's cool-headed raid to liberate a group of slaves and take them all the way to Canada, they came to realize that they were in a hard fight. Furthermore, their sulfurous reaction to this discovery, and their stupid tendency to paint



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Brown as an agent of the Republican Party, made it harder and harder for the invertebrate Lincolnians to keep the issue of slavery under control.

In his work in Kansas, and his long toil on the Underground Railroad, Brown was essentially mounting a feint. He knew that subscribers and supporters in New England would give him money, and even arms, for these limited and shared objectives. But he wanted to divert the money, and the arms, to the larger purpose of making any further Lincolnian retreats and compromises impossible. For years he had been studying the keystone town of Harpers Ferry, situated at the confluence of the Shenandoah and the Potomac, and handily placed for the potentially guerrilla-friendly Allegheny Mountains.

Reynolds shows that the strategic design was not as quixotic as one has often been led to believe. This northwestern portion of Virginia was generally sympathetic to abolition and to the Union (indeed, its later cleaving into the new free state of West Virginia, in 1862, is the only secession from that epoch that still survives). The fall months were the harvest season, when disaffection among overdriven slaves was more general. And the national political climate was becoming more febrile and polarized.

Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry failed badly, of course, but the courage and bearing he demonstrated after his humiliating defeat were of an order to impress his captors, who announced that far from being "mad," their prisoner was lucid and eloquent as well as brave. The slander of insanity was circulated by the weaker members of the anti-slavery camp, who cringingly sought to avoid the identification with Brown that the southern press had opportunistically made. By falling for its own propaganda, however, and in the general panic that followed the botched insurrection, the South persuaded itself that war was inevitable and that Lincoln (who had denounced Brown in his campaign against Douglas and in his famous speech at Cooper Union) was a Brown-ite at heart. The history of the six years after 1859 is the history not so much of Brown's prophecy as of the self-fulfilling prophecy of his enemies. As Reynolds hauntingly words it,

The officer who supervised the capture of Brown was Robert E. Lee.... Lee's retreat from the decisive battle of Gettysburg would pass over the same road that Brown took to Harpers Ferry on the night of his attack. The lieutenant who demanded Brown's surrender was J.E.B. Stuart, later Lee's celebrated cavalry officer. Among the officers who supervised at Brown's hanging was Thomas Jackson, soon to become the renowned "Stonewall." Among the soldiers at Brown's execution was a dashing Southern actor, John Wilkes Booth.

If this does not vindicate Brown's view that all had been predestined by the Almighty before the world was made, it nonetheless does do something to the hair on the back of one's neck. As do the words finally uttered in Lincoln's Second



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Inaugural, about every drop of blood drawn by the lash being repaid by the sword, and the utter destruction of the piled-up wealth of those who live by the bondsman's toil. The final reckoning with slavery and secession was described by Lincoln himself as one great "John Brown raid" into the South, and was on a scale that would have brought a wintry smile to the stern face of Oliver Cromwell. The "Marseillaise" of that crusade ("The Battle Hymn of the Republic," which first appeared, as did many other important documents of the Brown-Emerson alliance, in the pages of this magazine) was an adaptation of the foot soldiers' song about Old Osawatimie Brown. One reserves the term "quixotic" for hopeless causes. Harpers Ferry was the first defeat, as it was also the seminal victory, of a triumphant cause, precisely because it sounded a trumpet that could never call retreat.

So much for the apocalyptic and, if you like, "transcendental" influence of Brown. Reynolds, building on the earlier work of Merrill Peterson, traces another, gentler influence that may be no less consequential. Almost all whites in that epoch feared almost all blacks. And many blacks resented the condescension of anti-slavery organizations-most especially those groups that wanted to free them and then deport them to Africa. John Brown shared his life with slaves, and re-wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution so as to try to repair the hideous wrong that had been done to them. (In issuing these documents, by the way, he exculpated himself from any ahistorical charge of "terrorism," which by definition offers nothing programmatic.) The record shows that admiration for Brown was intense, widespread, and continuous, from Douglass to DuBois and beyond. Our world might be a good deal worse than it is had not numberless African-Americans, from that day to this, taken John Brown as proof that fraternity and equality, as well as liberty, were feasible things and could be exemplified by real people.

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August: The body of [Nicolas Copernicus](#) was exhumed from its unmarked tomb in Fromberg Cathedral.

DIGGING UP THE DEAD

Jack Turner, in “Performing Conscience” in [Political Theory](#) (Volume 33 Issue 4, pages 448-471) raised the issue of whether [Henry Thoreau](#) had a “positive” politics. Hannah Arendt, he pointed out, had famously portrayed Thoreau’s commitment to the sanctity of individual conscience as distinctly unpolitical. Although more recent commentators have been willing to grant that Thoreau had a politics, they have characterized his politics as profoundly negative in character. This author, however, argues that Thoreau indeed had sponsored a positive politics — and that this positive politics had been one of performing conscience. He bases his reading on Thoreau’s 1859 lecture defending the radical abolitionist [John Brown](#).<sup>145</sup> According to his view the performance of conscience before an audience transforms the invocation of conscience from a personally political act into a publicly political one. The aim of such a performance would be to provoke one’s neighbors into a process of individual self-reform that would render them capable of properly vigilant democratic citizenship, and conscientious political agitation.

The New York City health department called for voluntary elimination of [trans fats](#) at all Gotham restaurants. “Let’s don’t be evil.”

Outside the gates of the [Nevada Test Site](#) about 200 peace activists, including the actor Martin “Mr. President” Sheen, gathered for the perpetration of Thoreauvian [civil disobedience](#). Dozens of them crossed the police line and were given trespassing citations (no-one was taken into custody). Clearly, the participants in this action would come down on the side of performing conscience and –if they have studied the political writings of Thoreau at all– would like Jack Turner tend to accept him as having advocated a more positive rather than an exclusively negative politics.

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145. It is not clear whether the author is referring to “A Plea for Captain John Brown,” “The Last Days of John Brown,” or “After the Death of John Brown.” Perhaps any one of these texts would fit well into his argument.



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February 13, Monday/20, Monday: In The New Yorker, Adam Gopnik reports on page 164 that “visitors from Thoreau to Charles Dickens” inspected Shaker communities. For the record, Abba Alcott visited the Shakers at Harvard, Massachusetts, Charles Lane went, Waldo Emerson went, Isaac Hecker went, Nathaniel Hawthorne went, Bronson Alcott went ... but so far as I know, not Henry, ever. Also, Charles Dickens did inspect a Shaker community, but it wasn’t one in Massachusetts. Having seen this commentator as unreliable in this article about the Shakers, I thought I would look around for other evidence of Mr. Gopnik’s general level of scholarship. Refer to a book review he had placed in the April 25, 2005 issue of this magazine. In this piece he had originated a farrago of errors:

[H]e [John Brown] was a ... farmer who had gentle and respectful relations with neighboring Native Americans, so that, even before he became famous as the fighting fury of abolition, they liked and respected him. ... He is ... the acknowledged spiritual patron of Timothy McVeigh. ...he wanted to be black—to look black and think black and act black. (He may even have had his skin darkened in photographs to try to pass, in the opposite direction.) ... Brown in Kansas at first might seem to be without this cue to action—he was neither implicated nor particularly humiliated by the vigilantes until one realizes that the real trigger was something that had happened two days before in Washington. There, as Reynolds reminds us, a South Carolina congressman had beaten Senator Charles Sumner, of Massachusetts, nearly to death with the gold head of his cane for daring to speak out against the pro-slavery forces in Kansas and, in a feudal manner, for criticizing a kinsman of his. ...Brown brought in the black abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass, who took a look at the plan and refused to have anything to do with it, since it was obviously a blueprint for failure and the mass executions of blacks. ... [Once John Brown and his men had arrived at Harpers Ferry,] The slaves were armed and then, for the most part, looked around wondering what to do.

That being the situation, I would urge caution in regard to Gopnik’s allegations here, such as that Mother Ann Lee was sexually assaulted in America, until and until such data elements can be otherwise corroborated:

**SHINING TREE OF LIFE**  
**by ADAM GOPNIK**  
**What the Shakers did.**

Weary old faiths make art while hot young sects make only trouble. Insincerity, or at least familiarity, seems to be a precondition of a great religious art—the wheezing and worldly Renaissance Papacy produced the Sistine ceiling, while the young Apostolic Church left only a few scratched graffiti in the catacombs. In America, certainly, very little art has attached



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itself directly to our own dazzling variety of sects and cults, perhaps because true belief is too busy with eternity to worry about the décor. The great exception is the Shakers, who managed, throughout the hundred or so years of their flourishing, to make objects so magically austere that they continue to astonish our eyes and our sense of form long after the last Shakers stopped shaking. Everything that they touched is breathtaking in its beauty and simplicity. It is not a negative simplicity, either, a simplicity of gewgaws eliminated and ornament excised, which, like that of a distressed object found in a barn, appeals by accident to modern eyes trained already in the joys of minimalism. No, their objects show a knowing, creative, shaping simplicity, and to look at a single Shaker box is to see an attenuated asymmetry, a slender, bending eccentricity, which truly anticipates and rivals the bending organic sleekness of Brancusi's "Bird in Flight" or the algorithmic logic of Bauhaus spoons and forks. Shaker objects don't look simple; they look specifically Shaker.

Yet what the Shakers thought they were doing when they made their boxes and ladders and clocks, and why we think what they did was so lovely, remains something of a mystery, despite a booming market and the books to go with it. How did a sect so small make objects so sublime? Did they know what they were doing when they did what they did? Or were they doing something else, and doing this other, better thing on their way there?

The Shakers' early inheritance is English, and began with a strange visionary figure, Ann Lee, born on Leap Day in 1736. She was a woman who, in her lifetime, travelled, so to speak, from the world of E. P. Thompson to the world of William James—from a povertystricken and embattled sectarian North of England millennial religion to the new world of American self-made faith. At a time when Manchester was slowly becoming the industrial hell that, a hundred years later, Engels reported it to be, she was reared with seven siblings in a hovel, and her more luridly Freudian biographers suggest that hearing her father impregnate her mother again and again left her with the revulsion toward sex that distinguished her faith from competing millennial visions. Illiterate, visionary, charismatic, she took part in the swirl of "enthusiastick" sects that emerged at the time, dissenting from the Anglican Church and expecting the Apocalypse; in fact, the name Shakers was given originally to a subset of the people we know as Friends, the Quakers. The Friends and the Believers—those following Ann Lee—seem to have been mixed up by the authorities, if not by themselves, into a porridge of dissenters.

After a career as an amateur sermonizer, Mother Ann, as she was known, was thrown into prison, in 1772, for disrupting the Anglican Sabbath. There she had a vision that she was the second coming of Christ; she also began to believe that sex was the root of all evil. The idea had a genuine edge not so much of feminist rage as of women's pain: she had lost her four children



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to illness, and came of age in a working-class world in which constant pregnancy was a prime source of suffering. Her anti-sexual ethic was not so much anti-pleasure as anti-pregnancy. In 1774, she and her husband and several followers emigrated to America and, after a brief stay in New York, formed a community just north of Albany. It was only then that the Believers began to emerge as a distinct cult with a distinct cult practice—a religious sect gathered around a single charismatic figure. People used to think that the Shakers recruited mostly from the poor and unhoused, eager for even a chaste roof to shelter under. It's now clear, though, that a cross-section of the American population, rich and poor and in-between, joined them, for the usual mixture of reasons. And a regular intake of orphans and abandoned children gave the Shaker colonies the slightly misleading appearance of family. (There was a regular intake, as well, of people who wandered in for food and shelter in inclement times—"winter Shakers," they were called.)

Mother Ann's early followers shared her belief that she was a reborn Christ. She represented the fulfilled and completed Christ—her presence made the Messiah now sexually complete, both man and woman. Her latter-day followers tried to tone down her messianic pretensions, but they were clear, and outlasted her life. In an 1827 letter (published in 1985 by Stephen J. Stein, a Shaker historian), a young Kentucky Shaker, William S. Byrd, of the famous Virginia Byrds, admits that many "scof at the idea of Christs making his second appearance in Ann Lee" but then adds defiantly, "The same Christ that dwelt in Jesus of Nazareth, appeared the second time in this female, the spiritual Mother of all the new creation of God." Much as St. Augustine lent some of his sense of guilt and morbidity to early Christianity, Ann gave her neurasthenic desire for order and hyper-organization to all the later Shakers. Crowded poor people learn to hate disorder with a passion that for the wealthy is only a pastime; Groucho Marx, to take another important American spiritual leader, was so appalled by the chaos of his tenement childhood that, it was said, for the rest of his life he hated to have one kind of food on his plate touch another. (Whenever we see a fanatic appetite for order, there were probably once six kids in one room.)

Ann Lee became wildly controversial, and was attacked several times—and once, it seems, sexually assaulted—by gangs of local men. One of these beatings may have been the cause of her sudden death, in 1784. It was left to her disciples, particularly Joseph Meacham and Lucy Wright, to organize the Believers into fully self-sustaining celibate but coed communities. They spread quickly, and through the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth the Shakers became American icons, establishing colonies in the Massachusetts towns of Pittsfield and Harvard, and then throughout New England and as far south as Kentucky. Still, even at their height, around 1840, the Shakers were never very many: perhaps five thousand true



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Believers altogether. During Ann's lifetime, the shaking of the Shakers was already legendary, not to say notorious: they would expunge the old Adam by evenings of violent dancing and rhapsodic writhing. After the establishment of the communities, the thing became more formalized: a regimented after-dinner trembling, like line dancing at a sock hop. But what the dancing represented—a sublimation of, rather than an invitation to, sex—was apparent, and undisguised, and attracted the attention of visitors from Thoreau to Charles Dickens.

So far, so weird. How did they begin to make beautiful things, and why did those things take the form they did? There is no straight line between belief and building. Both Quaker and Shaker styles came of age in the early nineteenth century, at the time of a general neoclassical revival throughout Europe and America, when linear, stripped-down, right-angle schematics were everywhere. If the Shakers were going to make objects at all, those were the kind of objects they would make; it's not as though they were imitating the Nymphenburg rococo in that other utopian colony down the road.

Yet the Shakers made specifically stylish things, where others didn't. As a fine recent anthology, "Quaker Aesthetics," has shown, the Friends, apart from a general tendency toward the plain and suspicion of the fancy, had no real style separate from that of their fellow-Americans. They wore more or less the same clothes and used the same furniture as everyone else. (They just disapproved of their own use of them more than other people did.) So why did the Shakers have a style of their own?

Most of the elements of Shakerism are common to orders and sects: the Dervishes whirled, Dominican monks renounced the flesh. What seems distinctive is, first, their feminism and its insistence on coed monasticism, which made much of the sexual while also denying it. Theirs was a genuinely radical feminism. Shaker communities, though not specifically matriarchal in rule—there were plenty of male elders, too—were among the few American communities of nearly perfect sexual equality. There is even a sense, perceptible in the letters and other writings, that this made a Shaker colony a welcome place for "effeminate" men — a surviving letter reveals a code of homoerotic innuendo that is as easy to decrypt as pig Latin.

What also distinguished the Shakers was their odd join between violent anti-worldliness and thoroughgoing commercial materialism. Monks and monkish communities have, of course, sold goods to the world for a long time, from medieval cheese to Moonie cappuccinos. But the Shakers, faced with the need to support large communities, worked particularly hard to manufacture things for money. Many of the objects that we think of as archetypally Shaker—the long oval boxes with their lovely triple folds, the clean brooms and chairs—were designed and made largely for outside sale. With most tribes and sects that we look to as artistic innovators, the line between cult object and commodity product—between the true African fetish and





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airport art—is, if often far from sharp, at least tenable. It wasn't with the Shakers. Shaker style was a commodity almost as soon as Shakerism was a cult. Contrary to Thomas Merton's romantic assertion that each Shaker chair was made as though no other chair had been made before, Shaker chairs and other wooden objects were made in semi-industrial conditions for a growing middle-class market.

It is here, ironically, in the need to make things to sell to other people, that the first stirrings of a distinct style begin. This is not to say that the objects were made insincerely, or that Shakerism in design was a scam. The built-in cupboards and chairs and ladders constructed only for other Shakers, in Shaker communities, are made in the same spirit as the things for sale. The point is that no line was drawn the other way around, either: what was made for sale looked like what was made for sacred. The urge to make consumer goods is, after all, one of the keenest spiritual disciplines that an ascetic can face: it forces spirit to take form. An ascetic drinking tea from a cup decides not to care what kind of cup he's drinking from; an ascetic forced to make a cup has to ask what kind of cup he ought to drink from. By the mid-nineteenth century, "Shaker" had become a brand name.

Skeptics said that the work was a form of self-coerced indenture: the Shakers could make more objects more cheaply because, as one defense of the Shakers puts it, artisans "were free of distractions" and "freed from financial worries," and, as a critic would say, were not free (or chose not to be free) to sell their skills at their true value on an open market. As Michael Downing documents in a richly human book about American spirituality, "Shoes Outside the Door: Desire, Devotion, and Excess at San Francisco Zen Center," the Zen community in San Francisco in the nineteen-sixties and seventies similarly produced excellence and exhaustion in equal measure. The Zen community could draw on underpaid cooks to run the Greens restaurant as the Shakers could draw on unpaid artisans to make their clocks; the proportion between beatitude found and skill exploited was left to the maker to figure. The enterprise gave the Shakers a curious double existence as a scary sect and a solid brand. And the Shaker brand was gold. "When a man buys a kag of apple sass of you," the humorist Artemus Ward wrote approvingly, around the time of the Civil War, "he don't find a grate many shavins under a few layers of sass."

But if that helps explain why they made so many boxes, it doesn't explain what made the boxes so fine. Some insight into what the Shakers were doing and thinking comes from the rare occasions when they were making art objects properly so called—visionary drawings. These were produced when, from the eighteen-twenties to the eighteen-fifties—around the time of the Second Great Awakening—the Shakers, within their already spiritualized environment, went through a kind of spiritual reawakening of their own.



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A spiritual reawakening within a community already drawn taut by spiritual aspiration must have created a strenuous atmosphere. Visions and ghosts came down, and the Shakers, chiefly women and young girls, made "gift drawings": the drawings were gifts from above, not gifts to another. For the most part, they are conventional folk art—except for several by a Shaker woman named Hannah Cohoon, who lived in the Hancock community, and who was a kind of Emily Dickinson of drawing. Her four surviving signed drawings show a concentration on a single form rather than a chatty, anecdotal all-overness, quite outside the normal round of folk art. One of them, "A Little Basket Full of Beautiful Apples" (1856), is among the key drawings in American art, with a tonic sense of abundance—all the apples just alike, each with its rub-on of rouge, like blush applied by an adolescent girl—allied to obsessive order. Another, the famous "Tree of Light or Blazing Tree" (1845), shows us a vision seen in a dream: a tree with each leaf embroidered with fire, part of the normal Shaker iconography of the tree of life but also alarming in its overcharged richness. Cohoon's intensity was concentrated not on transcendental images of saints or God but on homely American objects, picnic tables and baskets of apples.

This way of imbuing the ordinary with a sense of the numinous is at the heart of the Shaker aesthetic, by far the best extended account of which can be found in "The Shaker World: Art, Life, Belief," by the art historian John T. Kirk. Kirk argues that there are Shaker specificities, and that they reside in a series of simple design moves that are independent of the neoclassical run of the time, making a unique combination of slenderness, tenderness, and boxiness. Shaker ladders and chairs and tables tend, first of all, to be improbably long, attenuated. There was a practical reason for this: communal living demands long tables in large buildings. Things grow long naturally in dormitories. But practical necessity is always the lever of creation; the line between practical necessity and aesthetic impulse is not merely fine but nonexistent. (The last thing in the world Michelangelo wanted to paint was a ceiling. Once up there, he saw the celestial possibilities.) This constant attenuation—a pulling out of chair legs and table lengths—is one of the things that make Shaker design so seductive, in the most direct way. For attenuation in art inherently has two meanings: long, slender things are chic, as with every fashion model, and they are spiritual, as with the figures in Chartres or Blake's flamelike personages.

Shaker objects are also unusually repetitive: Kirk calls these Shaker formats "tight grids," and they infect everything the Shakers made, a last long lingering echo of Mother Ann's hatred of the collapsed and squalid mess of the one-room home. Everything in the Shaker world, from brooms to villages, is laid out in rows, grids, tightly packaged and formatted. (The insistence on the villages' grid planning was even formalized



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in the Shakers' "Millennial Laws" of 1821.) The grid plan of a Shaker village is unlike the seemingly similar neoclassical grid plan of, say, Quaker Philadelphia, where the regular spacing allows a rational calm to fall over the streets and squares. The plans for Shaker villages are, instead, tight and surprisingly asymmetrical, with long straight main streets and side streets that jog off abruptly at odd intersections; like Shaker furniture, Shaker plans can accept asymmetry if it is dictated by practicality. Shaker plans look less like something drawn up in an Enlightenment encyclopedia than like something sketched by a seer with an Etch A Sketch, lines sprouting and kicking out at odd but angular angles.

One sees the same principle—apparent rationality inflected with an underlying obsessiveness—in the prime Shaker objects. In an amazing midcentury case with cupboard and drawers made by the carpenters in the community in Enfield, Connecticut, two doors, above and below, mismatch, while two central drawers are broken up arrhythmically into smaller parts. It is like a cupboard in Morse code, stuttering out one half and two shorts. That Shaker box, similarly, bends around, and each element has a logic to it—the copper tacks to prevent rust, the beautiful embracing swallowtail fingers to keep the box from cracking—but it has none of the "that's that" shortcut simplicity of folk objects; instead, a kind of underlying delirium infects it, an obsessive overcharge of finish, the sense of a will to perfection investing an otherwise humdrum object. "Trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle" was a Shaker motto. "God is in the details"—but the details have to provide evidence of God.

The Shakers were ascetics without being Puritans. They didn't object to color and comfort, even as they rejected ornament and luxury. (Many of the objects that look ascetic to us have simply lost their original paint.) A wonderful chair in the Hancock village is made to lean back: a rocking chair without rockers, at perpetual tilt. Yet all these elements—the flat grid patterning, the acceptance of asymmetry, the tolerance for the drumbeat repetition of similar elements without an evident hierarchy of form—add up to a simple idea: Shaker design, while reaching toward an ideal of beauty, unconsciously rejects the human body as a primary source of form. To a degree that we hardly credit, everything in our built environment traditionally echoes our own shape: we have pediments for heads and claw and ball feet, and our objects proceed from trunklike bases to fragile tops. Repetition and the grid are two alternatives to design that refers to classical perspective space and the roundly realized human body. They reappear in twentieth-century art through the Cubist desire to make playthings that snubbed their noses at perspective, and the Teutonic urge to make a new language of pure form. Once you have got rid of the body as a natural referent for design, and no longer think "pictorially" about objects, grids and repeats begin to appear as alternative systems, whether you are in Japan, Montmartre, or Hancock. The



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love of asymmetry, which seems to us so sophisticated, involves a violation of the same taboo, since symmetry is the essence of human beauty. All Shaker design implies a liberation from "humanism" of this kind. When we make objects that look like us, we unconsciously are flattering ourselves. The Shakers made objects that look like objects, and that follow a non-human law of design.

One sees the pattern clearly in the evolution of the casement clocks—what we call grandfather clocks—made by the Youngs family of New York over three generations, in and out of the community of Believers. The clocks of the elder Youngses, Seth and his son Benjamin, as described in Glendyne R. Wergland's "One Shaker Life," are in the manner of Greek columns, with strongly articulated bases, long shafts, and "heads" with clock faces. Over time, the clocks that Benjamin made became more narrowly "neoclassical": the bases simplified and their moldings reduced, the clock-head narrowed in size, the clock's lines made neater and more geometrical. But Isaac Newton Youngs, the grandson, was reared as a Shaker, and the clocks he made became as reductive as a refrigerator case, with the sides of the clock neither tapering nor swelling, and, telltale sign, with a knob on the clock face as well as on the clock body to allow the worker to adjust or repair the inside: the allergy to putting a functional element on an object's "face" was overruled, because the artisan was not thinking of it as a face. In each case, the clocks got not merely simpler—though they did that, too—but progressively less figural.

This doesn't mean that the Shaker objects are "inhuman" in the sense of being cold. They aren't cold. The brooms and clocks and boxes create an atmosphere of serenity, loveliness, calm certainty. But these are monastic virtues rather than liberal ones. We miss the radical edge of Shaker art if we don't see that it is not meant to be "humanistic." (As much as the Moonies ever have, Shaker communities worked hard to exterminate individuality: people dined together, slept together, and even, in Hancock, were buried together, in a single common grave marked "Shakers.") Most religious objects, from Baroque Catholic baldachins to Hindu temple ornaments, are worldly but immaterial, made with immense sophistication in order to make the ordinary physical world seem to vanish in a smoke cloud of spirals and twists and flames. Shaker objects are, like Zen Japanese ones, unworldly but material, far from sensuality but solid as a rock. They annihilate the body, and leave us timeless form to tell the time with.

The Shakers waned as swiftly as they rose, and by the early twentieth century they were as much a relic cult as a living force. They existed in order to be in decline: the Fall and the Paradise are about the same thing. (There is evidence that the Shakers themselves, even by the end of the nineteenth century, lived in conventional rooms with ordinary objects.) In this way, though, Shakerism—the enthusiasm of the Shaker design, and the



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accompanying cult of box and broom—is not merely a nostalgic invention. Rather, it has always been a nostalgic invention: the nostalgia was there almost before the experience happened. After their first blooming period, the Shakers existed to be remembered. But at the same time consumer-goods Shakerism, which led to catalogues of Shaker chairs, cloaks, and baskets, continued to accelerate, until Shaker shopping was a major occupation, and this is a phenomenon of the late nineteenth century, not the twentieth.

The Shakers, then, did not simply survive as a path to purity never pursued. Instead, they permanently defined a curiously American composition, played in the blue key of E: enlightenment, entrepreneurialism, and exploitation all in counterpoint, with a half-heard chord of illicit eroticism. The attempt to make monastic communities that will be simultaneously asexual, industrial, and fully integrated into the entrepreneurial society around them—that will do good and do well—is so deeply embedded in our history that it recurs again and again. As Downing documents, its latest incarnation has been the Zen experience—which is uncannily like the Shaker experience, and which also involved the implantation of a slightly misunderstood alien dogma, and an immense outpouring of American spiritual yearning, a taste for commercial prosperity on the part of its leaders, and an inability to figure out what the hell to do about sex. As the Shakers made a revolution in American objects, American Zen made a revolution in American cooking, giving vegetarian food dignity. And, when the communities went into crisis, first the plates, and then the food, were what was left.

We should, perhaps, feel disappointed by this descent from the spirit, but some of us may wonder if the spirit has greater gifts to give. Food and boxes are not ethically neutral; they radiate their own aura into the harried lives of people who own them, even if only as aspiration. They were elevated, not debased, to become bourgeois amenities; they passed from the realm of false belief to the realm of spiritualized form. A forthcoming book, "Selling Shaker: The Promotion of Shaker Design in the Twentieth Century," by Stephen Bowe and Peter Richmond, discusses, with a good deal of detailed analysis and some fine mordant humor, the slow process by which Shakerism continues to creep into the American marketplace, as Mother Ann's purities become the playthings of Oprah Winfrey. But a sneaking, not quite justifiable prejudice infects the study, in the authors' implicit belief that believing that Mother Ann was God and sex evil was intrinsically a higher-order activity than just liking to own Shaker boxes. This belief feels more Puritanical than Shakerian. Surely the aesthetic contemplation for other purposes of objects first made for cult use is more or less where the idea of art begins—the Shaker work counter in the hands of Oprah is, in this sense, not very different from the Renaissance altarpiece in the hands of Bernard Berenson—and, after all,



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Shakerism crept into the American marketplace by way of the American marketplace, where the Shakers placed it. In American art, the line between the goods and the good is a fine one, and doesn't benefit from being stared at too hard or cut too finely. In a commercial society, the membrane that separates spirit and store is always permeable.

Yet the blazing tree remains alight. Kirk ends his fine book with a slightly naïve inquiry into the relation between Shakerism and the objects of American minimalism, and shows that the formal elements of the two—the grid, the repeated element, the entire anti-humanism of the approach—rhyme if they do not repeat. Look-alikes aside, what most connects the minimal art of Judd and Serra and Stella with their very improbable predecessors is their fanaticism. The moderns are uncompromising, too: only this box now and now this box again. That same uncompromising fanaticism gives life to what might otherwise be mere Teutonic austerity and pedantic insistence. The violence done to natural form, and to the humanism it implies, creates a serene result with a perceptible violence just beneath.

American art benefits from the fanatic, as American writing does not: the visual arts threaten to disappear back into the big jumble of things we see and own unless they are marked by some kind of extremism. Writers may be Friends, but artists are Believers, or they are not much. The twin legacy of Shakerism is true to the twin roots of the Shakers' vision: they remain both as a model of wild-eyed and unreal renunciation and as makers of simple good things. The shining tree of life is a tree of light that illuminates the way for believers. It is also on fire, and can only be consumed.



RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

2007

[Henry Petroski](#)'s THE TOOTHPICK: TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE.

Professor Brian Treanor's "The Virtue of Simplicity: Reading Thoreau with Aristotle" appeared in the Concord Saunterer.

I read Professor Treanor's article just after returning from the "Thoreau Birthday Celebration" of July 2008 in Concord in a blue Funk (I'll need to explain why I was in this sort of vehicle). The thing I instantly recognized about his article is that it furnishes us with a complete explanatory hypothesis for two otherwise puzzling aspects of Thoreau's life:

- [Henry Thoreau](#)'s defense of [John Brown](#), which seems incommensurable with what he had written earlier about civil disobedience
- Thoreau's long-term interest in native Americans

His defense of Captain Brown can be seen as an expression of virtue ethics, since Brown was a person who was determinedly following his inspiration with his whole heart and soul and life, regardless of the difficulties into which this might lead him and others. There are many scholars now who choose to suppose that Thoreau had experienced a change of heart and was endorsing Brown's deeds of violence "in a good cause" — but these folks choose not to think about the fact that when New Englanders approached Thoreau with the idea of organizing an expedition to sneak down through the mountains, descend on the lockup in Charlestown, Virginia, and rescue Brown just before his hanging, Thoreau would have none of this but insisted that Brown must hang. (They also choose to avoid the fact that although Thoreau could readily have fit into his schedule a trip to attend Brown's interment, and although he had been honored by being invited to speak at this occasion, he did not stir himself to make the trip to the Adirondacks.)

Professor Treanor's article also implicitly offers an explanatory hypothesis about Thoreau's interest in American Indians. Recognizing the weakness of an Aristotelian stance in ethics that was entirely devoid of the  $\phi\rho\rho\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$  community standards that customarily support judgments of *phronesis*, Thoreau set out to discover whether such a  $\phi\rho\rho\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$  might not be recoverable from pre-contact native American culture and behavior.

[W]hile Thoreau is no misanthrope, he is convinced that his society is a bad influence and an obstacle to living well. Thoreau simply lacks the bedrock faith that Aristotle has in his community.... This lack of faith in community, and therefore in the community's role model for living well (the *phronimos*), means that Thoreau cannot accept Aristotle's response to the charge of relativism.... As Thoreau says, "I would not stand between any man and his genius; and to him who does [that] which I decline, with his whole heart and soul and life, I would say, Persevere, even if the world call it doing evil, as it is most likely that they will." ... At most, Thoreau intends his account of life at Walden Pond to be an example that *inspires* others rather than an example for *emulation* by others.



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Now as to why I had come away from the Concord birthday celebration in that blue Funk. Late in the conference I had stood and spoke during a question-and-answer period about the desperate need of the abolitionist community for what I termed “damage control” subsequent to Captain John Brown’s treasonous attempt to incite race war by seizing a federal arsenal and arming blacks with pikes and swords and firearms. What I offered amounted to the idea that by 1859 the abolitionist movement had persuaded a number of white Americans to take an attitude of pronounced sympathy toward the plight of enslaved blacks — but that these white Americans had just learned (courtesy of Brown and his pikes) that for them to indulge their sympathy was causing them to be associated with bloody treason and was causing them to run a risk that their own precious little ones would be hacked to death in their beds in a servile insurrection similar to the bloody ones that had occurred under Nat Turner, under Denmark Vesey, and most especially under Toussaint L’Ouverture in Haiti. Abolitionism stood instantly to lose the support of all these marginal sympathizers unless immediate and effective damage control could be effected — and when Frederick Douglass fled to England, it was Henry Thoreau who courageously stepped into this breach. His proposed solution was to re-imagine the perpetrator of this shocking violence as a martyr, someone who was offering his own life to bring salvation to others — that is, by suggesting a outrageous similarity between John Brown being hanged upon the gallows in payment for his crime and Christ being crucified on the cross in payment for our sins. I concluded my remarks by posing a question: why was it that in all these analyses of Thoreau’s “Defense of Captain Brown,” we never hear the words “damage control”?

The scholar in the front of the room with the microphone responded to this with one magisterial declaration: “Henry Thoreau did not do damage control.” A titter of amusement went around the room at the effective manner in which I had been squashed, I seated myself, and the conference moved right along. Such a straightforward repudiation of my remarks would seem to imply that they had been so utterly without foundation as to be unworthy of anyone’s attention. I left the conference after this piece of insolence wondering whether I would ever again subject myself to taking part in these pseudoscholarly assemblies so lacking in standards of objectivity and openness.

Thoreau’s reaction to this raid on the federal arsenal, a raid in which two [Quaker](#) young men (the Coppoc adopted brothers from Iowa) had taken part bearing weapons of murder, has been a great source of tribulation to me as a Quaker committed to the Peace Testimony. Although it is common among Thoreau scholars to interpret “Defense of Captain Brown” to amount to a defense of violence, with such persons as Robert Richardson hypothesizing even that had Thoreau’s health been better he would have picked up a rifle like Gary Cooper in “Gentle Persuasion” and begun to kill Southerners, and with people *marveling* that Thoreau had not participated in the raid on the arsenal, it is not possible for me personally to follow such a “Gentle Persuasion” trajectory of interpretation. Instead I focus on what Thoreau himself pointed out: that under such circumstances John Brown’s “highest and best purpose was to be hung.”

I am able to infer only that Thoreau’s after-the-fact oratory was intended, not to justify the violence which had taken place, but to salvage the precious abolitionist cause from the incredible harm which had just been done to it by this extremist, and indeed one may well note that after the hanging had taken place, Thoreau dropped this matter like a hot potato, not even bothering to attend the burial of a person whom he had recently characterized as Christlike.

I approached Professor Treanor because I suspect that his interpretation of Thoreau as a virtue ethicist speaking in support of those who dare to follow their genius is an interpretation which renders Thoreau’s early stances consistent with his later stances, an interpretation which makes it unnecessary for us to hypothesize that Thoreau had a late Gary-Cooperish introduction to a real world of justified violence.



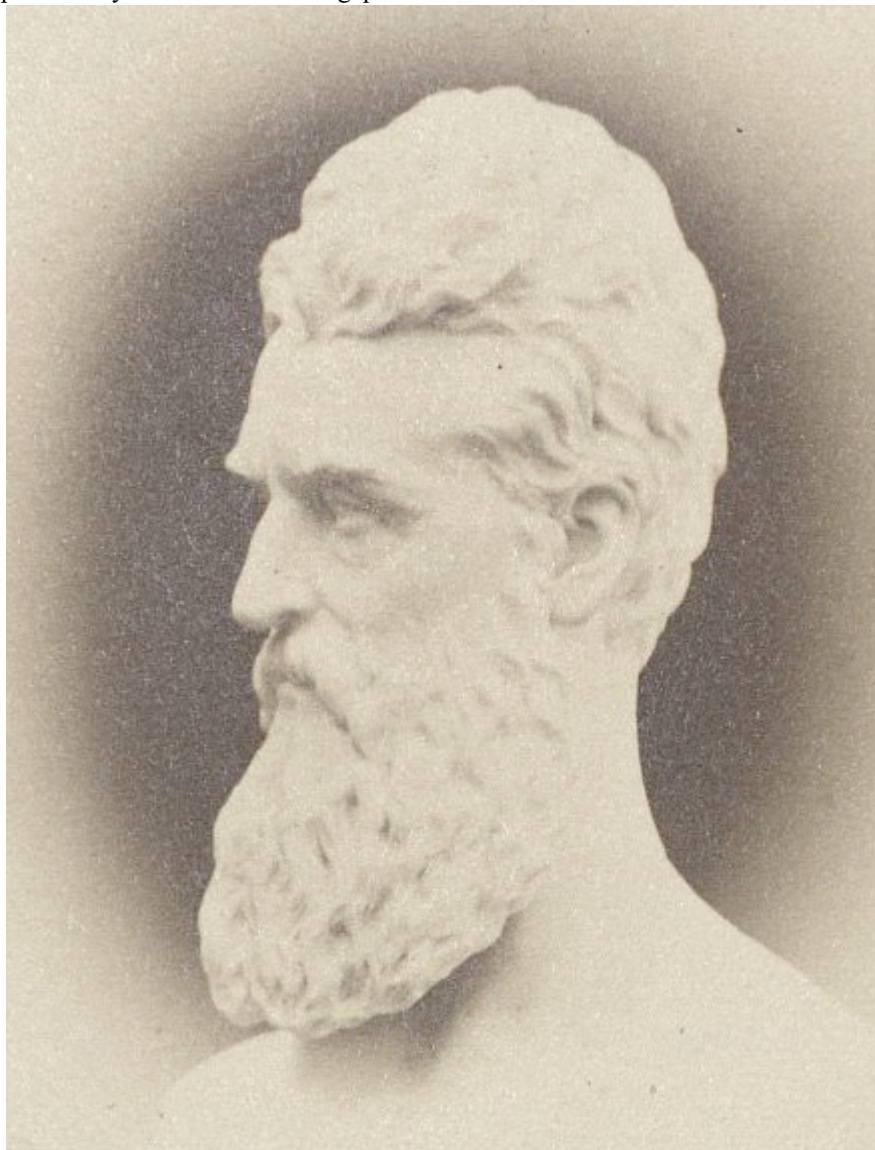


RACE WAR,

NOT CIVIL WAR

2016

October: For many years the only record we had preserved, of the marble bust that had been carved by [Edward Augustus Brackett](#) during the [Civil War](#) depicting the hanged abolitionist [John Brown](#), had been a cabinet photograph made by Warren of Cambridgeport:



Recently, however, this 250-pound piece of marble has been located (it had been in storage without a nose, with graffiti on its eyeballs, lying flat on a pallet wrapped in plastic, at Tufts College). See the next screen:

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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"  
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: December 8, 2016



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# ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

## GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.



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Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.  
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.