

THE GILDER LEHRMAN INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

Inside the Vault : Highlights from the Gilder Lehrman Collection

October 1, 2020

The session will start shortly. Please note:

- Your video and audio will automatically turn off.
- You can participate through the Q&A function.
- If you have technical difficulties, please email firstfriday@gilderlehrman.org so we can assist you.

Gilder Lehrman Staff

Panelists

- Sandy Trenholm - Collection Director
- Colby Lewis - Principal Standby for George Washington, Aaron Burr, Marquis de Lafayette/Thomas Jefferson, and Hercules Mulligan/James Madison in *Hamilton*
- Nate McAlister - 2010 National History Teacher of the Year from Topeka, Kansas

Support

- Allison Kraft - Assistant Curator

During the Session



- If you would like to ask a question, you can **use the Q&A feature**, which is at the bottom of your screen.
- **Viewing in full screen** is recommended to see the presenters and the presentation at the same time.

For Security

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.

Today's Documents



Gilder Lehrman Collection

- John Brown's final speech
- Broad sides demonstrating Northern reaction to Brown's execution
- A letter from Mahala Doyle to John Brown
- A Southern newspaper report about the Harpers Ferry Raid

John Brown (1800-1859)

- Born in Torrington, Connecticut
- Came from a devout Calvinist family with anti-slavery views
- Saw himself as a religious warrior.
- Believed in total equality
- Married twice and fathered twenty children
- Lived in Ohio, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Kansas, and New York

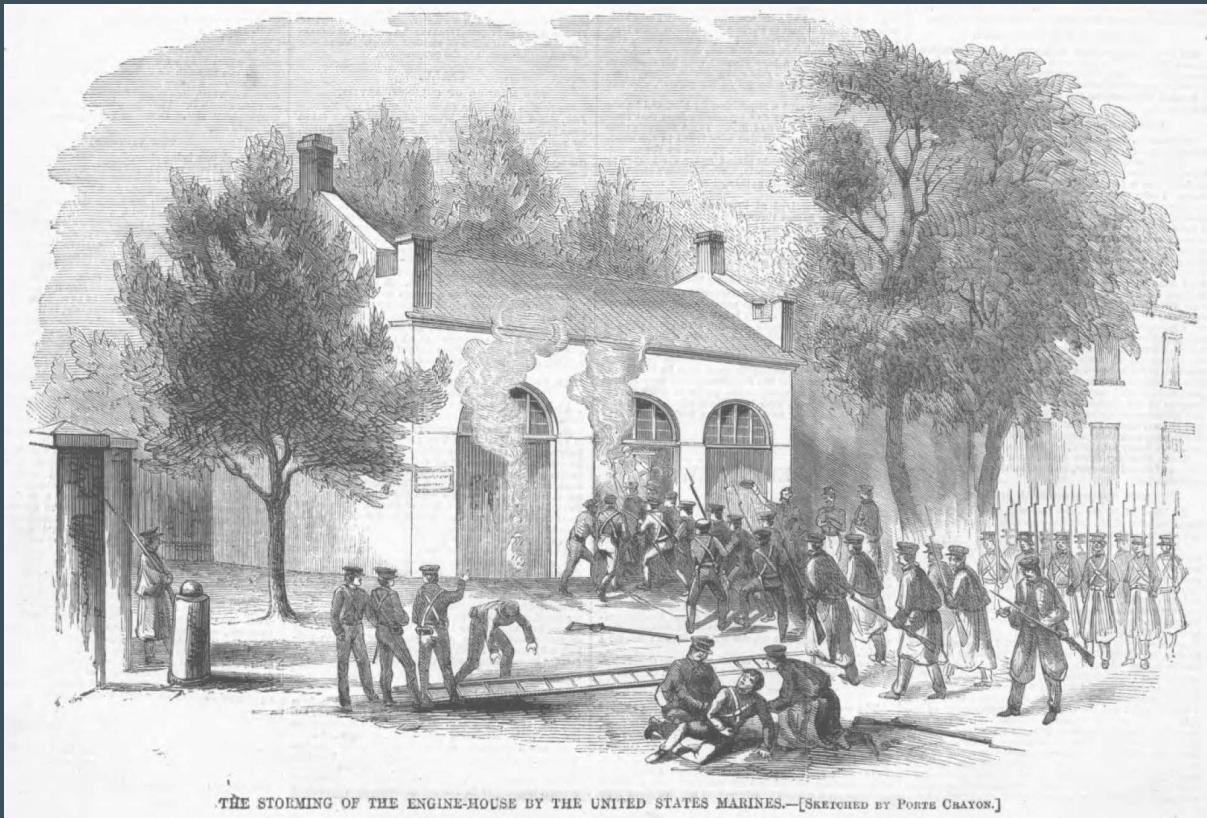


No Union with Slaveholders

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY

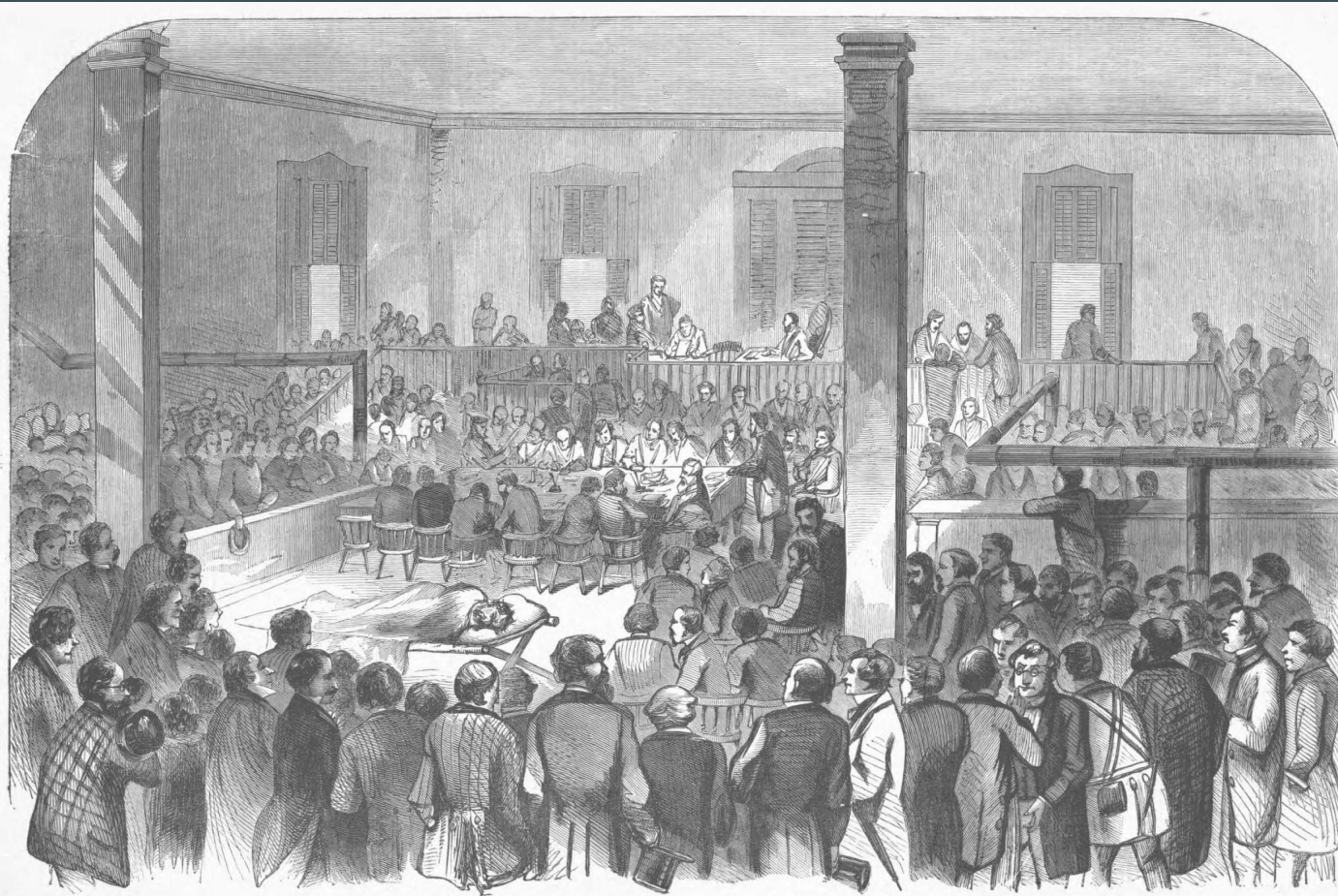


Gilder Lehrman Collection



Raid on the Federal Arsenal

- October 16, 1859, John Brown led twenty-one men into Harpers Ferry, Virginia, to seize the federal arsenal.
- Townspeople and local militia companies trapped Brown and his men in the engine house.
- US troops commanded by Colonel Robert E. Lee arrived the next day and stormed the engine house.



THE TRIAL OF JOHN BROWN, AT CHARLESTOWN, VIRGINIA, FOR TREASON AND MURDER.—[SKETCHED BY FORTÉ CRAYON.]

Outcome of the raid

- Five of Brown's party escaped, ten men were killed, and seven men, including Brown, were taken prisoner.
- Brown was tried in a Virginia court.
- Brown was hanged on December 2, 1859.

ADDRESS OF JOHN BROWN

To the Virginia Court, when about to receive the

SENTENCE OF DEATH,

For his heroic attempt at Harper's Ferry, to

Give deliverance to the captives, and to let the oppressed go free.

[Mr. Brown, upon inquiry whether he had anything to say why sentence should not be pronounced upon him, in a clear, distinct voice, replied :]

I have, may it please the Court, a few words to say.

In the first place, I deny every thing but what I have already admitted, of a 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 there took Slaves, without the snapping of a gun on either side, moving them through the country, and finally leaving them in Canada. I desired to have done the same thing again, on a much 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, that it is *unjust* that I should suffer such a penalty. Had I interfered in the manner, 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, brother, 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*. Every man in this Court would have deemed it an act worthy a reward, rather than a punishment.

This Court acknowledges too, as I suppose, the validity of the LAW OF GOD. I saw a book kissed, which I suppose to be the BIBLE, or at least the NEW TESTAMENT, which 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 yet too young to understand that God is any *respector 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*, I have done no 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 say, 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; but I feel no consciousness of guilt. I have stated from the first what was my *intention*, and what was not. I never had any design against the liberty 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 that kind.

Let me say something, also, in regard to the statements made by some of those who were connected with me. I hear that it has been stated 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 regarding their weakness. Not one but joined me of his own accord, and the greater part 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.

John Brown

*John Brown's Address,
November 2, 1859*

Address of John Brown, 1859

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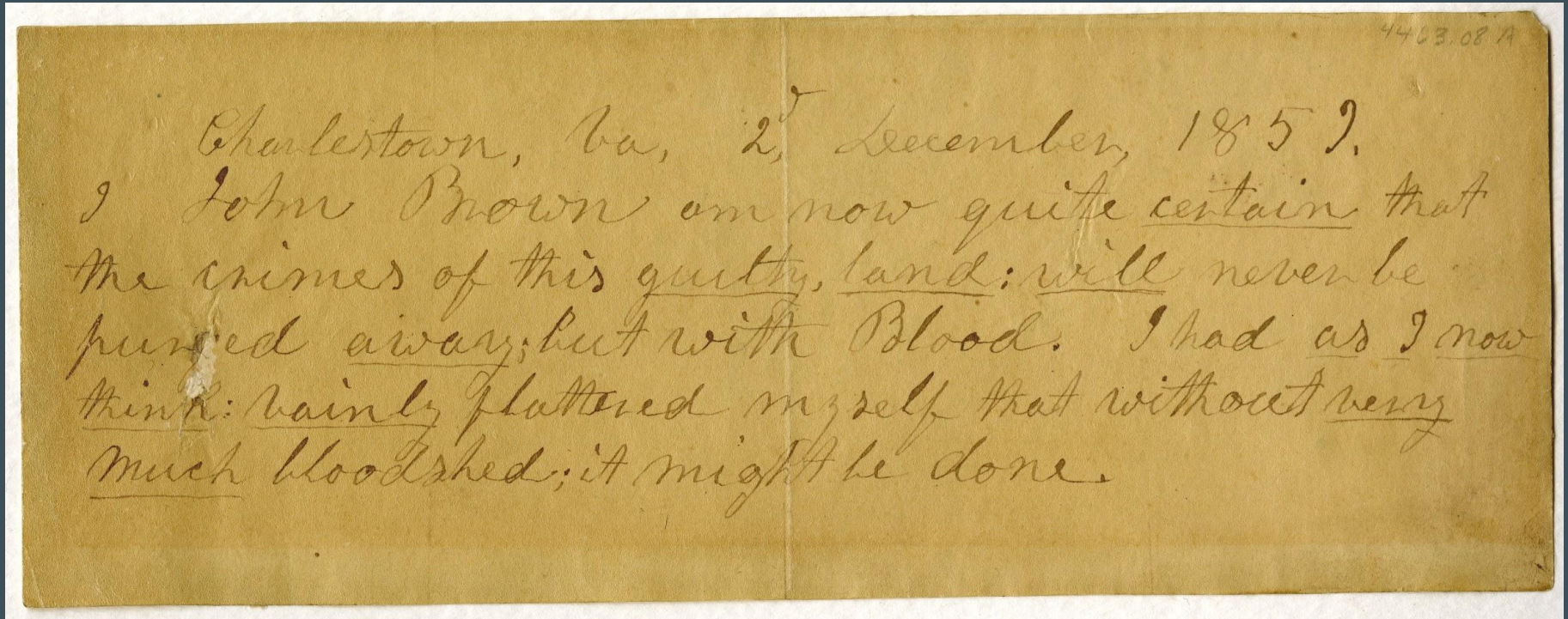
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Let me say one word further: I feel entirely

John Brown's final written words



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“I John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty, 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.”

Chattanooga Tennessee
20th November 1859.

John Brown

Sir

altho vengeance is not mine, I
confess, that I do feel gratified to hear that you
were stoppt in your fiendish career at Harper's 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 of the yard and
in cold blood shot them dead in my hearing, you
cant say you done it to free our slaves, we had
none and never expected to own one, but has only
made me a poor disconsolate widow with helpless
children while I feel for your folly. I do hope &
trust that you will meet your just reward.
O how it pained my heart to hear the dying
groans of my husband and children if this
scrawl give you any consolation you are welcome
to it

Mahala Doyle

*Mahala Doyle
to John Brown,
November 20, 1859*

Doyle to Brown, 1859

“I confess, that I do feel gratified to hear that you ware stopt in your **fiendish career** at Harper’s 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 of the yard and in cold blood shot them dead in my hearing, you cant say you done it to free our slaves, we had none and never expected to own one, but has only made me a poor disconsolate widow with helpless children....”

Martyrdom of John Brown.

EXERCISES

— AT THE —

TOWN, HALL, IN CONCORD,

On FRIDAY, December 2nd, 1859,

AT 2 O'CLOCK, P. M.

MUSIC.

PRAYER.

HYMN,

"Go to the grave in all thy glorious prime."

READING OF PERTINENT PASSAGES.

SELECTIONS FROM BROWN'S LAST WORDS.

SERVICE FOR THE DEATH OF A MARTYR.

DIRGE;

To-day beside Potomac's wave,
Beneath Virginia's sky,
They slay the man who loved the slave,
And dared for him to die.

The Pilgrim Fathers' earnest creed,
Virginia's ancient faith,
Inspired this hero's noblest deed,
And his reward is—Death!

Great Washington's indignant shade
Forever urged him on,—
He heard from Monticello's glade
The voice of Jefferson.

But chiefly on the Hebrew page
He read Jehovah's law,
And this from youth to hoary age
Obeyed with love and awe.

No selfish purpose armed his hand,
No passion aimed his blow;
How loyally he loved his land
Impartial Time shall show.

But now the faithful martyr dies,
His brave heart beats no more,
His soul ascends the equal skies,
His earthly course is o'er.

For this we mourn, but not for him,
Like him in God we trust;
And though our eyes with tears are dim,
We know that God is just.

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Concord, Dec. 30, 1859.

Northern Reaction to John Brown's Execution

BROWN HUNG

An adjourned *Brown Meeting* will be held at
WENTWORTH HALL
On Friday Evening, December 9th, at 7 o'clock.

HON. E. GRAHAM, of De Witt, will be
present and participate in the exercises. All
(*not* excluding the Ladies,) are invited to attend.

WM. WENTWORTH, *Chairman.*
C. B. CAMPBELL, *Secretary.*

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Southern Reaction



“The insurrection at Harper's Ferry was simply no insurrection at all. Not a slave joined the reckless fanatics who sought to promote their nefarious policy of emancipation by blood and treason. It was a silly invasion of Virginia by some eighteen men. Four or five men were killed, and a few more will be hung, and there will be the end of the enterprise in its mere physical aspects. The presses of the North ... are pretty harmonious in representing it as a very light and trifling affair....”

The Charleston Mercury, *November 1, 1859*

“For twenty-five years the northern people have been keeping up a continual agitation in the Union concerning the institution of slavery. They have broken up our churches; they have run off our slaves; they-have excluded us from our territory on the ground that the institution of slavery is too iniquitous to expand; and they have now organized a vast controlling party in the Northern States . . . to further their purposes of emancipation.”

The Charleston Mercury, *November 1, 1859*

“‘tranquility’ and protection, hostility and insurrection are now its natural fruits. The Harper's Ferry invasion, therefore, if wisely considered, is of vast significance, and should lead the people of the South to prepare for those future events, of which this is only the premonition.”

Aftermath

- John Brown was executed on December 2, 1859.
- November 6, 1860, Lincoln is elected President of the United States
- December 20, 1860 - South Carolina secedes from the Union

John Brown's body lies a mould'ring in the ground
John Brown's body lies a mould'ring in the ground,
John Brown's body lies a mould'ring in the ground
His soul is marching on.

Cho.

Glorious! Glorious! Halleluia
His soul is marching on!

John Brown's body
lies a mould'ring in the ground
His soul is marching on!

How?

Why?

Q&A

**Did you
know?**

Who?

Project guidelines

Browse documents

Transcribe

Log out

GLC09620.026: Robert L. Stone, to Jacob Stone, 10 May 1943.: Page #1

Original title: 0%20.026_00001.jpg

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Protection: Open to all

Expiration: Never

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Monday Night

Dear Dad—

Have no time to write because we have a math test tomorrow. I do, however, want to answer a few questions from your letter I received today. First off, I plan to have a picture taken but as I've told you I've only been in Houston once. I'll get you one as soon as I get

Online History School, beginning October 9

- Courses for grades K-12 with topics including:
 - Hamilton cast read-along
 - Alexander Hamilton and his world
 - Women who made history
 - Civil Rights Movement
 - APUSH
- New for Fall:
 - Pedagogy course for teachers
 - All courses recorded and made available on our website



Upcoming Programs

- *A Tribute to Teachers: Heroes of 2020*, Wednesday, October 7 at 8 pm ET (5 pm PT) featuring a special message from Lin-Manuel Miranda
- *Inside the Vault*, Thursday, October 15 at 7 pm ET (4 pm PT)
 - We will feature items related to the women's suffrage movement, including a note on the state of suffrage by Susan B. Anthony.
- *Book Breaks*, October 4 at 12 pm ET (9 am PT)
 - Rick Atkinson discusses his book *The British are Coming: The War for America, Lexington to Princeton, 1775-1777*, winner of the 2020 George Washington Prize.
- Visit gilderlehrman.org for free resources for students, teachers, families, and history enthusiasts of all ages.